

*Locating home: The diverse experiences of recent newcomer youth and first
generation youth within Ontario's education system*

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ABSTRACT

This study has found that youth who or whose parents had left their home country for fear-based reasons were less involved within their school and wider community than youth who left or whose parents left for reasons concerning their social mobility. Many existing studies focus on the challenges newcomer youth experience within the education system (see Anisef, Brown, Phythian, & Sweet, 2010), however through the use of qualitative methodologies this study expanded on the current literature by further examining why it is some youth are successful in overcoming such challenges, while others are not. This study supported what has been demonstrated in the literature regarding challenges faced by newcomer youth and resources to address such challenges. Despite challenges experienced within the education system, youth planned to complete secondary school and attend a postsecondary institution. However, not all youth anticipated remaining in Canada upon completion of their education, with youth or youth whose parents left their home country for fear-based reasons frequently discussing the possibility of returning to their or their parents' home country. Thus, perhaps these youth were less involved within their school, as their goal was not necessarily to establish or maintain connections within their community as they may have viewed residing in Canada as temporary. This finding has important implications, as there are benefits to involvement in extracurricular activities, which may assist youth in overcoming challenges encountered within the education system. Therefore, it would seem that youth who had or whose parents had left their home country for reasons concerning their social mobility may have be at an advantage within the education system with respect to their involvement in school. Perhaps then this differential involvement may at least partially explain why it is some newcomer youth are able to overcome challenges they experience in the education system, while others are not. Both policy and theoretical implications are discussed.

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Chapter One: Introduction and Literature Review

Newcomer youth have been a population of interest among researchers for many years. There have been studies examining their acculturation experiences in relation to their new host countries (see Berry 1997; Berry 2005; Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006), parent-child conflicts during acculturation (see Hatton & Bacic, 2001; Tardif-Williams & Fisher, 2009), and their integration into the workforce (see Behnke, Piercy & Diversi, 2004; Riphahn, 2002). In addition, many studies have focused on educational attainment and experiences among newcomer youth (see Anisef & Bunch, 1994; Watt, Roessingh & Bosetti, 1996; Anisef, Brown, Phyhian, Sweet & Walters, 2010). The educational experiences of newcomer youth have been the subject of much study as youth generally find themselves in the school system – a system that aims to assist them in adjusting to their new environment.

However, much of the above research has looked at newcomer youth as a largely homogenous group with some studies focusing on specific nationalities or ethnic categories (see Green, Rhodes, Hirsch, Suarez-Orozco & Camic, 2008; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995; Zhou & Bankston 1998), and a few notable exceptions that have examined diversity within newcomer youth. The research that has been conducted examining newcomer youth as a homogenous group has been important in pointing out larger trends and patterns within education and other contexts. Similarly, the research that has focused on specific nationalities or ethnic categories has been able to examine how particular cultural and contextual factors specific to individual groups might impact or

change the patterns shown in research on the larger homogenous group. In addition, those studies that seek to tease out the diversity within the newcomer youth population provide rich data about the different pathways newcomer youth pursue and the factors that contribute to their decisions to pursue specific pathways.

Research Questions

The aim of this research is to examine the diverse experiences of newcomer youth in relation to the process of acculturation within an educational context. The purpose of this research is to explore how newcomer youth describe their educational experiences and to consider the diversity in both their perceptions of their experiences and the actions that they take towards achieving their academic goals. Specifically, the research questions are as follows:

- What challenges do youth report experiencing within the education system?
- What resources do youth feel are the most beneficial in addressing the challenges they face within the education system? What additional resources could be offered by the education system?

This research included two studies. In the first study, the above research questions were explored through focus groups. It was found that youth who referred to Canada as “home” or planned on remaining in Canada were found to frequently discuss their school and community involvement in response to questions asked. However, youth who referred to their or their parents’ home country¹ as “home” and considered returning did not discuss their involvement within school or the wider community. It is possible that

¹ A newcomer’s “home country” refers to his/her country of origin whereas a newcomer’s “host country” refers to the country, which has received him/her.

the youths' choice to refer to Canada versus their parents' home country as "home" as well as their desire to remain in Canada versus to return is influenced by their reason for emigrating from their home country. For example, perhaps youth or youth whose parents left their home country for fear-based reasons hope to return and thus view residing in Canada as temporary². These youth may therefore not feel the need to be as involved within their school and the wider community to the same extent as those youth or youth whose parents immigrated to Canada for reasons concerning their social mobility. Therefore, Study 2 was designed to explore if it was possible for youth to be divided into two groups based on the reasons they provided for having emigrated from their home country and furthermore, if these two groups would show a different pattern of engagement within their school and the wider community.

Acculturation

A discussion on acculturation is needed to understand these youths' experiences upon arriving to their host country. According to Berry (2005), "acculturation is the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members" (p. 698). Though acculturation is a process which occurs between both a newcomer and the individuals within the host country (Berry, 2005), as explained by Tardif-Williams and Fisher (2009), this interaction is often unaccounted for in the current research on acculturation.

² Youth who shared that they or their parents had left their home country because there was a war occurring, the country was becoming dangerous or their family was being pressured by the government were considered to have left for "fear-based" reasons. However, youth who reported that they or their parents had left their home country because they had been offered a job opportunity in Canada or because they wished to come to Canada to live with a family member who was here were referred to as leaving for reasons concerning their "social mobility".

Furthermore, Ward (1996) has proposed two corresponding types of adaptation which take place when a newcomer arrives to his/her host country; sociocultural adaptation refers to a newcomer's social skills and his/her ability to interact and to navigate successfully within his/her host country, while psychological adaptation refers to a newcomer's emotional wellbeing and his/her overall satisfaction with life.

In addition to adaptation, Berry (1997) has proposed the following acculturation strategies, which a newcomer may adopt upon arriving to his/her host country: separation, assimilation, integration and marginalization. Separation occurs when a newcomer continues to practice his/her home country's culture without partaking in the cultural practices of the host country. Conversely, assimilation occurs when a newcomer fully participates in the cultural practices of the host country and does not do so with the culture of the country of origin. Integration refers to when a newcomer embraces aspects of the cultural practices of both his/her home country and host country. Finally, marginalization occurs when a newcomer rejects both the cultural practices of his/her home country and host country. While these acculturation strategies aid in understanding what occurs during the process of acculturation, researchers have argued that the use of a conventional model of acculturation such as this may not account for individual differences such as generational status, background or culture (Tardif-Williams & Fisher, 2009). As it is the intention of the current study to examine the diverse experiences of newcomer youth, it is important that concerns such as these be acknowledged, as newcomer youth are not a homogenous group (McGrath, 2008; Yakushko, Watson & Thompson, 2008). Thus, while the usefulness of this model is appreciated, this study

aims to extend upon current literature, which attempts to highlight the diversity within the newcomer youth population.

Though current research that illustrates the diversity present within the newcomer youth population does exist, Ngo (2008) has argued that the dominant discourses concerning newcomer youth continually represent their experiences as “simplistic” (p. 4), and fail to address the various experiences of these youth relating to both immigration and education. To provide an example, research has indicated that refugees commonly face additional challenges in the process of immigration and acculturation when compared to immigrants (Hatton & Bacic, 2001; Kao & Tienda, 1995; Opoku-Dapaah, 1995); therefore, it might be expected that differences would also exist between immigrant youth and refugee youth within an educational context. However, few studies have addressed the differences between these two groups in childhood or adolescence.

Cultural identity. One of the ways that diversity has been examined in acculturation research has been through a focus on cultural identity. While this approach does not delve very deeply into the diverse experiences of newcomer youth, it does allow for an examination of differences between more distinct groups within the newcomer youth population. As recent research has supported the study of acculturation with greater specificity than has traditionally been the case (Phinney & Flores, 2002), an exploration of cultural identity will now be provided. As explained by Phinney, Berry, Vedder and Liebkind (2006) cultural identity is both a newcomer’s ethnic identity as well as his/her national identity; it is the “the extent to which immigrants identify with [both] their ethnic group and with the larger society” (Phinney et al., 2006, p. 72). More specifically as expressed by Tajfel (1981), ethnic identity refers to “that part of an individual’s self

concept which derives from [his] knowledge of [his] membership with a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (p. 255).

The following distinctions of acculturation profiles have been identified in regards to cultural identity (Berry et al., 2006): (a) the ethnic profile represents youth who align themselves more towards the cultural practices of their home country; (b) the national profile includes youth who align themselves more towards the cultural practices of their host country; (c) the integration profile refers to youth who partake to a large extent in the cultural practices of both their home country and host country; and finally (d) the diffuse profile includes youth who are unable to be placed in any other profile. Newcomer youth belonging to the integration profile have been found to demonstrate better psychological as well as sociocultural adaptation.

While these profiles assist in understanding the experiences of newcomer youth, it is important to remember that with increased contact zones and the deterritorialization of culture as discussed by Appaduria (1990), traditional boundaries are blurring with respect to cultural practices and therefore these profiles should be understood as only possibilities by which to understand cultural identity. Specifically, as expressed by Wierzbicka, cultures should no longer necessarily be understood as “bound, discrete and self contained entities” (as cited in Bhatia & Stam, 2005, p. 427), which is especially relevant to the experiences of newcomers who may bring with them aspects of their home country’s culture to their host country, all the while engaging in aspects of their host country’s culture (Wierzbicka, 2005).

Development offers another important framework for understanding cultural identity among newcomer youth. A great deal of research (see Phinney, 1989; 1993; 2003; 2006) has focused on understanding cultural identity and its impact on youth by exploring how youth develop ethnic identity. The adolescent years are particularly important in the development of ethnic identity (Phinney, 1989; 1993), in addition to ego formation (Erikson, 1968). Marcia (1980) has put forth the four following stages involved in identity exploration and commitment: (a) identity diffusion, in which an individual has neither explored or committed to an identity; (b) foreclosure, in which an individual has committed to an identity without exploration; (c) moratorium, during which an individual has begun to explore though has not committed to an identity; and finally (d) achieved identity, in which an individual has both explored and committed to an identity. Phinney (2006) has proposed that in regards to ethnic identity, newcomer youth go through a similar process of ethnic identity diffusion to either foreclosure or moratorium and finally ethnic identity achievement.

Though newcomer youth proceed through the stages of ego formation in what could be described as a somewhat linear fashion, these changes are not necessarily linear for newcomers becoming more assimilated within their host country over time (Phinney, 2003). For example, it is possible for a newcomer to develop a bicultural identity (Phinney, 2003); consider the integration profile of cultural identity in which a newcomer possesses a high ethnic identity as well as a high national identity.

Though identity development is not a linear process, Berry and colleagues (2006) have identified the following factors which influence acculturation in regards to the previously discussed cultural identity profiles. To begin, length of residence in the host

country has been found to be related to a higher national identity. Furthermore, a diverse group of friends has also been associated with a high national identity, whereas youth who live in diverse communities are more likely to belong to the integration profile. Likewise, the higher the parents' socioeconomic status (SES), explained by the parents' profession and neighborhood of residence, the lower the likelihood of the youth being classified within the separation profile. Finally, religion has been found to be related to cultural identity, with youth from Eastern and Judeo-Christian religions frequently belonging to the integration profile, and Muslim youth most often belonging to the ethnic profile. Taken together, it is evident that newcomers are "not necessarily free to choose how they acculturate as their experience depends to a large degree on the conditions of the larger society" (Phinney et al., 2006, p. 75).

For example, a newcomer youth may be influenced by the attitudes demonstrated by individuals in respect to their culture (Phinney et al., 2006). Minority youth may also experience discrimination to a greater extent since their cultural practices often differ from those of the dominant society (Fuligni, Witkow & Garcia, 2005). However, ethnic identity has been found to influence an individual's wellbeing in positive ways as well (Erikson, 1968; Phinney, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). One such example involves the positive self-attributes an individual develops as a result of belonging to a group that he/she feels good about (Phinney, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Ethnic identity formation is especially important to minority youth because the dominant society places particular importance on the ethnic identities of minority group members, including newcomers (Phinney, 1990).

Furthermore, possessing a bicultural identity has been found to have positive

psychological impacts (Bialystok, 1999; Carringer, 1974; Peal & Lambert, 1962); specifically, it has been shown to have a “positive impact on intellectual development and subjective well-being” (Chen, Benet-Martinez, & Bond, 2008, p. 805). This finding supports Berry’s (2006) contention that youth belonging to the integration profile of cultural identity tend to have both better psychological as well as sociocultural adaptation (Berry, 2006).

Education

Although identity may be positively associated with wellbeing, newcomer youth continue to experience challenges within the education system, some of which are the result of systematic discrimination (Anisef & Bunch, 1994; Johnson & Peters, 1994; Lam, 1994), leading to marginalization and secondary school dropout rates of up to 74% (Watt & Roessingh, 2001). The challenges experienced by newcomer youth will now be examined, followed by a consideration of the resources available to address these challenges. Some research has shown that newcomers to Canada tend to complete secondary school at the same rate as individuals born in Canada (Anisef et al., 2010). However, differences in the academic achievement of recent newcomer youth and first generation youth³ have been documented, with first generation youth having been found to achieve greater academic success than their recent newcomer youth school peers; however if newcomer youth arrived to their host country before their formal education began, this difference did not exist (Cortes, 2006), perhaps as an outcome of acculturation

³ The term “newcomer youth” is used as it is commonly done in the existing literature to refer to both newcomer youth who have recently arrived to Canada and first generation youth who were born in Canada but whose parents were born elsewhere. However, when differentiating between these two groups in the current study, the terms “recent newcomer youth” and “first generation youth” are used to refer to these two groups, respectively.

level. Despite this distinction, Anisef and colleagues (2010) state, “empirical research from Canada and elsewhere has indicated that immigrant and visible minority children tend to have more difficulty in school” (p. 108). Though this finding is important as it provides valuable information on general trends, this quote illustrates that despite their differences, subgroups of newcomer youth such as recent newcomer youth and first generation youth are often homogenized in the current literature. The distinction of these two groups is important because these youths’ differential academic attainment suggests that further diversity is likely to exist in their educational experiences.

To begin, upon arriving to their host country, recent newcomers experience stress as a result of their relocation, and adjustment to an unfamiliar education system adds to this stress (Hospital for Sick Children, 2005; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010). For example, recent newcomer youth may not be familiar with academic streams, the semester system or class hours (full day versus half day) (Watt et al., 1996). In addition, some recent newcomer youth have reported the difference in student-teacher relationships, teacher expectations (Watt et al., 1996), and certain teaching formats as being difficult to adjust to (Wadsworth et al., 2008). More broadly, recent newcomer youths’ lack of familiarity with their host country’s norms creates additional challenges (Chen, 2000; Coleman, 2006).

Furthermore, upon initially entering into the education system, recent newcomer youth are often placed into an inappropriate grade (Hospital for Sick Children, 2005; Ngo & Schleiffer, 2005). Even when placed into an appropriate grade, recent newcomer youth and first generation youth alike may remain at a disadvantage as their experiences are not commonly included in class discussions or assigned readings; for example, in the case of

Black youth, Black history is often not given the same coverage as European history, if covered at all (Codjoe, 2001). Likewise, when included, the experiences of newcomer youth may be misrepresented; consider the fact that images of successful Black individuals typically include musicians or athletes as opposed to scholars (Codjoe, 2001). Though Canada has an official policy on multiculturalism, Zinga and Davis (2006) argue that to date, Canada “has maintained curriculum and organizational structures that are based within white Eurocentric biases” (p. 214). For example, multiculturalism is often addressed by teachers in the classroom only with respect to the celebration of holidays (Sogunro, 2001).

Likewise, teachers have been found to commonly possess low expectations of newcomer youth, and such expectations negatively affect newcomer youths’ academic performance (Lam, 1994; Wadsworth, 2008). Consider Asian newcomer youth who have been referred to as the “model minority” (Ngo, 2008, p. 5). Zhou and Bankston (2001) postulate Asians as a group who work hard and are offered support and encouragement from their families to do so. Ngo (2008) feels that this view has the potential to subsequently blame the cultural practices of newcomer youth of other ethnicities, rather than examining the responsibilities of the education system when academic success is not achieved in their host country. Thus, the education system needs to ensure the needs of all newcomer youth are being met.

Discrimination by teachers has also been found to contribute to a decreased academic self-concept and a decreased number of healthy peer relationships (Davison, Aviles, Guerrero, Barajas & Thomas, 1999). Another possible reason for the difficulty newcomer youth experience in developing relationships with peers is a sense of perceived

difference as experienced by their peers (Closs, Stead, Arshad & Norris, 2001).

Unfortunately, experienced teachers who have the ability to assist youth in establishing peer relationships are frequently attracted to schools with a greater sense of community, and often newcomers do not reside in areas where such schools are located (Coleman, 2006). It has also been suggested that newcomer youth may lack the skills required to establish meaningful relationships with their school peers and school personnel (Ngo & Scheiffler, 2005). For example, lack of familiarity with the English language may discourage newcomer youth from participating in class discussions and/or extracurricular activities which may serve to assist them to develop connections to their school (Watt et al., 1996). Consider a study conducted by Watt and colleagues (1996) where a Vietnamese participant noted that he had wanted to socialize with students whose first language was English, but had found it considerably easier to befriend a fellow Vietnamese student. Furthermore, it has been suggested that many parents are at a disadvantage in their ability to assist their children within the education system (Gandara & Contreras, 2008; Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008). For example, parents often experience difficulty in maintaining correspondence with school personnel (Coleman, 2006).

Newcomer youth and their parents face additional challenges with respect to poverty, as 30% of newcomer youth are reported to live below the poverty line (Beiser, 1999). Poverty has also been found to negatively affect the academic achievement of newcomer youth for various reasons (Anisef & Bunch, 1994; Coleman, 2006). For instance, there may be a lack of nutritious food available in their homes, thus affecting their ability to concentrate on schoolwork (Anisef & Bunch, 1994; Pollitt, 1994).

Likewise, newcomer youth may not have access to a computer in their home or a quiet space where they are able to complete their homework undisturbed, possibly affecting the quality of their homework.

In addition, newcomer youth may have less time to devote to their homework, as many newcomer youth have to maintain part time jobs in order to assist their families financially (Anisef & Bunch, 1994). In more extreme situations, newcomer youth may have to leave school altogether in order to acquire full time work to assist their struggling families (Lam, 1994; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995). Lastly, financial circumstances may require newcomer youth to move frequently (Coleman, 2006).

Despite the obstacles newcomer youth may experience within the education system, schools have been found to be a viable point of intervention in which to address challenges newcomer youth experience (Anisef & Kilbride, 2001; Yakushko et al., 2008). The education system is also an ideal setting for the delivery of resources as newcomer youth often enter into the education system shortly after arriving to their host country and adolescents spend a significant amount of their time at school (Han, 2008). However, research calls for adjustments to be made to the current resources which are available to newcomer youth, as the education system has been unsuccessful in its effort to offer much needed resources to newcomer youth (Anisef & Kilbride, 2001; Schwitzer, 2008). Specifically, in research conducted by Anisef and Kilbride (2001), 57% of newcomer youth reported that current resources were inadequate. In addition, it has been found that newcomer youth are often not familiar with the resources that are available to them (Anisef & Kilbride, 2001).

Resources or strategies that have been proposed by newcomer youth to help them overcome challenges within the education system include having a former English-as-a-second-language (ESL) student come in to speak with newer students. For example, this student could help explain requirements of the education system, including graduation requirements. Other suggestions include (a) delivering instructions in a visual format in addition to a verbal format, (b) allowing newcomer youth to begin homework assignments in class to ensure assistance is available if the instructions are not clear to them, and (c) the development of a homework club. Within mainstream classrooms, it may be beneficial for teachers to assign students to groups, ensuring that newcomer youth are assigned to groups with students for whom English is their first language. Lastly, it has been suggested that encouragement to participate in extracurricular activities should be offered to assist newcomer youth in establishing peer relationships (Watt et al., 1996).

This latter suggestion concerning participation in extracurricular activities is important as participation in such activities has been found to increase newcomer youths' sense of community (Watt et al., 1996), which in turn has been shown to positively affect academic achievement (Coleman, 2006). Beyond improving academic achievement, participation in social activities (of the home country's or host country's culture) has been found to help newcomer youth in both their school adjustment as well as social competence (Chen & Tse, 2010).

In addition to friendships, which may be enhanced through participation in extracurricular activities, research has also found that a supportive adult may act as a determinant of newcomer youths' positive adjustment within the context of the education system (Rak & Patterson, 1996; Ungar, 2004b; Werner & Smith, 1992). In instances

when parents are not familiar with the education system and/or language barriers exist, Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker (2000) have proposed that the support offered by teachers to newcomer youth may serve as a particularly salient predictor of their academic achievement. Some examples of such support include setting goals which encourage cooperation among students, discouraging competition between students, and stressing respect within the classroom (Ryan & Patrick, 2001). Thus, experienced teachers are able to create a sense of community within their classroom, which contributes to academic success (Coleman, 2006). In addition, teachers have the ability to host culturally sensitive parent-teacher meetings, which may encourage parents' active involvement with their child's education (Green et al., 2007). Such parental involvement is important as the support offered by parents has been found to increase academic achievement among newcomer youth (Lahaie, 2008).

Finally, minority students have been shown to achieve greater academic success when class discussions or assigned readings include information specific to their ethnicity (Kagen & Zahn, 1975; Stevenson, Lee, Chen, Stringler, Hsu & Kitamura, 1990); consider for example the inclusion of Black history for Black students. In addition, when accurate information on a specific ethnicity is presented, it has been found to assist in breaking down negative stereotypes (Berry et al., 2006). For example, as mentioned previously, successful Black individuals are often portrayed in the media as musicians or athletes as opposed to scientists, which perpetuates the stereotype that Black students do not excel in academia (Codjoe, 2001). However, when there is an inclusion of images of successful Black individuals in other professions outside of the typical portrayals, this stereotype is challenged.

Watt and colleagues (1996) have also documented reasons why newcomer youth who have completed secondary school have been successful in doing so. Such reasons include: (a) a student's willingness to work hard, (b) a student's expectation that he/she would complete secondary school, (c) having the knowledge that more education entails a better career, and (d) having a goal such as learning English or obtaining a specific career which requires the completion of secondary school. This particular importance newcomers often place on education upon arriving to their host country has been referred to as the immigrant drive (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Academic aspirations such as these are important because education has the potential to provide newcomer youth with upward mobility (Hao & Pong, 2008; Suarez-Orozco & Saurez-Orozco, 1995).

Given newcomer youths' academic goals, one of the main research questions that has driven many of the studies on newcomer youth within education focuses on why students drop out of the educational system. Factors that have been found to influence newcomer youth drop out rates include age of immigration (see Cortes, 2006; Landale, Oropesa & Llanes, 1998), home country (see Warren, 1996), and socioeconomic status (see Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995), but also factors specific to one's school environment such as disinterest, student-teacher relationships and academic performance (see Bushnik, Barr-Telford & Bussiere, 2004). A recent study conducted by Anisef and colleagues (2010) demonstrates that this focus on why newcomer youth remain in school or drop out is still one of the primary foci for research. The study focused on documenting factors affecting secondary school drop out rates of newcomer youth in Canada and is of immense value to the province of Ontario, given that the 2001 census states that Toronto has "one of the highest proportions of foreign born of all major urban

cities in the world” (Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2003, p. 2). However, what is still needed is research to further explore why some youth are successful in overcoming these challenges, while others are not.

In summary, newcomer youth are not a homogenous group but rather a diverse group who experience challenges during the process of acculturation and integration into the education system. However, despite these challenges, many newcomer youth demonstrate resilience and are able to achieve academic success, while others drop out. Therefore, it remains important to examine the actions newcomer youth take within the education system towards achieving their academic goals, which may further shed light on the diversity in their experiences.

Chapter Two: Study One Methods

Design

This research extends on Dr. Dawn Zinga's SSHRC funded research project entitled, *Giving Voice to the Barriers Faced by Culturally Diverse Youth*. Though data collection was conducted within the same focus groups, data was analyzed separately with respect to the separate research questions. Ethics approval was gained from both Brock University (06-286) and the school board in which the research was conducted.

Qualitative methodology was chosen as it is important to speak with youth in an effort to gain a "solid understanding of the issues" (Anisef & Kilbride, 2001, p. 26), in addition to providing them an opportunity to share their voices. Specifically, the use of focus groups for data collection was selected as Krueger and Casey (2000) state, "focus groups work particularly well to determine the perceptions, feelings, and thinking of people about issues" (p. 12). In addition, it was hoped that the use of focus groups decreased power differentials and allowed youth to feel more comfortable as they were in the presence of their peers.

Participants

Research was conducted in various secondary schools throughout a school board in Southern Ontario. Any student was eligible to participate in this study as long as both the student and his/her guardian (if under the age of 18) had signed and returned a consent form (see Appendix A). Specifically, both male and female newcomer youth were sought out to take part in this study and participants included recent newcomer youth ($n = 7$) as well as first generation youth ($n = 4$); however, in an effort to ease the recruitment process, no student was turned away and therefore participants also included

mainstream youth⁴ (n = 4). See Table 2.1 for a summary of the recent newcomer and first generation youths' demographics.

Youth were asked to describe their backgrounds in addition to being asked how they identified themselves. All of the youth chose to provide a description of where they or their parents were born and how long they had been in Canada, while no youth chose to identify using terms such as immigrant or refugee. Based on these youths' descriptions, it was decided to group these youth according to generational status, as either recent newcomer youth or first generation youth. Since the term newcomer or immigrant is commonly used to refer to both recent newcomer youth and first generation youth, this grouping allows for further exploration of their experiences. It is understood, however, that individual differences will exist within each group (for example, culture, religion, age, personality and upbringing).

⁴ "Mainstream youth" included youth who were born in Canada and had at least one parent born in Canada.

Table 2.1

Participants' demographics

	Age	Recent newcomer or first generation	Home country	Months in Canada	Completed ESL programming	Mother's education	Father's education
Focus group 1	17 = 1 Unassigned = 1	First generation = 2 Recent newcomer = 0	India = 1 Greece/England = 1	N/A = 2	N/A = 2	Elementary = 1 High School = 1	Elementary = 1 High school = 1
Focus group 2	16 = 1 17 = 1 Unassigned = 2	First generation = 2 Recent newcomer = 2	China = 1 Jordan = 1 Lebanon = 1 Pakistan = 1	60 = 1 96 = 1 N/A = 2	N/A = 2 Yes = 2	College = 1 University = 3	University = 4
Focus group 3	15 = 1 16 = 2 18 = 1 20 = 1	First generation = 0 Recent newcomer = 5	China = 1 Guyana = 1 India = 1 Pakistan = 1 Vietnam = 1	10 = 1 18 = 1 22 = 1 36 = 1 Unassigned = 1	Currently = 3 N/A = 1 Yes = 1	Elementary = 1 High school = 3 University = 1	College = 1 High school = 1 University = 3

Materials

Youth were asked questions from the focus group guide (see Appendix B)⁵ concerning both their background and educational experiences. The background questions asked youth their age, where they were from and how they would identify themselves, in addition to asking why they and/or their parents had come to Canada and if they planned on staying. The majority of the questions concerning the youths' educational experiences were open-ended; for example, youth were asked what their favourite things about school are and what helps them stay in school.

Procedure

Youth from the same secondary school participated in one focus group, as the use of preexisting groups can assist in overcoming stigma when sensitive issues are discussed (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001). The focus groups were organized with the assistance of a teacher, who both distributed consent forms to potential participants and agreed to excuse these youth from class should they wish to participate. Three focus groups were conducted consisting of 6, 6 and 5 youth, respectively, following Bloor and colleagues' (2001) recommendation that 6-8 participants are an optimal number for a focus group. Also, Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) explain that within a larger group there may not be sufficient time for equal participation and the group may become difficult to manage. Focus groups were conducted in a private location on school grounds and were one school period in length to minimize disruption to the youths' school day. In addition to the facilitator, an assistant also attended each focus group, whose responsibilities included filming the session. All focus groups were videotaped as

⁵ Questions that were only relevant to the study *Giving Voice to the Barriers Faced by Culturally Diverse Youth* appear bolded in the appendix.

videotaping allows for more accurate pairing of specific participants and their comments, which was necessary to answer the current study's research questions.

At the beginning of each focus group, the consent form was reviewed and collected. Following initial reminders and introductions, youth were asked questions from the focus group guide. Questions concerning youths' background information were posed to each youth in turn, after which a general discussion commenced⁶. Once all questions were addressed, each youth received a \$10 gift certificate from Indigo for his/her participation in addition to a feedback letter (see Appendix C).

Data Analysis

Youths' responses from all focus groups were analyzed together, rather than separately by individual focus group as it was not the intent of this study to provide an evaluation of the programs offered by the individual schools and it was expected that since all focus groups took place within the same school board, the programs and resources offered would be similar. In addition, analyzing all focus groups together assisted to ensure the youths' confidentiality when providing the school board with an executive summary of the findings.

Note that responses provided by mainstream youth were not included in the analysis, because while these youth were permitted to take part in the focus groups, they did not belong to the study's population of interest and furthermore did not participate in high numbers. With the aid of NVivo 8, responses provided by youth were coded into nodes. To begin, a tree node was created with each question from the focus group guide

⁶ Note that youth were not asked how they would describe themselves as the question appears in the focus group guide, as youth did not employ such terms in their responses to the prior question concerning their backgrounds.

set up as a parent node and the youths' common responses to the question coded into child nodes. The responses provided by youth were then summarized for each question. When presenting the summary of responses in the results section, excerpts from the transcripts are included in an effort to both share and accurately represent the youths' voices. Pseudonyms rather than youths' names are used to ensure the youths' confidentiality.

When appropriate, child nodes were examined for recurring responses provided by recent newcomer youth and first generation youth in an effort to further examine their diverse experiences. Following this, open thematic coding was completed to allow for themes to emerge from the data as a whole (Braun & Clarke, 2006; McNabb, 2002). As explained by Braun and Clarke (2006), this method involves initially coding transcripts one line at a time, from which various themes should emerge. Transcripts are then reviewed a second time to sort youths' responses into the previously identified themes. By coding in this manner, three themes emerged: (a) the importance of education, (b) educational experiences, and (c) school and community involvement.

Chapter Three: Study One Results

The results will be presented in the following manner: the question posed to the youth appears in bold followed by a summary of responses, including some particularly insightful examples. The questions are presented in the order in which they appear in the focus group guide. When differences were found in the responses of recent newcomer youth and first generation youth, subheadings were used to distinguish each group's responses. Note that questions relating to the transition into a Canadian school were not applicable to first generation youth and therefore they did not respond to these questions. Finally, the results of the thematic coding are presented in the following order: educational experiences, importance of education, and finally school and community involvement.

Focus Group Guide Questions

What brought you to Canada? Youth discussed both education and the opportunity for a better life as reasons for immigrating to Canada:

Alex: Basically just for the education (Focus Group 2, 425).

What are your favourite things about school?

Recent newcomer youth. Youth discussed courses they enjoyed and their course workload. For example, one youth shared:

Amy: I really like this school compared to what I had in China, so yea. Um there's a lot more different courses for like the arts they're all separated up so you can find your own interest. That was really good.

I: So how is it different from your school in China?

Amy: In China it's kind of just the academic courses. You don't really get to explore things like painting or sculptures or photography. It's just the basics science, physics, math, English, languages. And also the exams here are pretty easy (Focus Group 2, 565-573).

When asked what their favourite things about school were, youth also discussed having

good friends.

First generation youth. Only two first generation youth shared positive school experiences, both involving teachers; for example, teachers are supportive and some teachers really love teaching, which is evident in their classrooms. Interestingly, the latter comment was both preceded and followed by negative recollections of personal experiences with teachers.

What was the transition into a Canadian school like? The most common response provided by youth to this question was that learning the English language was difficult. The following youth's response illustrates this sentiment:

Andrew: It's so much different here from back there cause like ah down there just the schools are harder like the courses and all that cause just here it's all in English and you have to get used to it and all that. The first couple years it was kinda hard to learn the language and to study everything in English, so yea (Focus Group 2, 632-635).

Youth also replied that learning other subjects such as math and science was not as difficult as learning English, as the education system in their home country had prepared them well. As one youth shared, she had previously covered the material her Canadian teacher was currently teaching in these subjects:

Debra: It won't really be hard for me-- The math and science and stuff because the stuff that they do here now I finish at my college so it was kind of difficult not that much (Focus Group 3, 285-287).

One youth compared his experiences in his home country to his experiences in Canada when describing his transition, providing insight into the conditions of his former education system:

Andrew: It was harder just like if you didn't do your homework and all that they used to hit you back there (Focus Group 2, 639-640).

Are there any programs or resources that helped make your transition easier? Youth responded that overall, their transition into a Canadian school was “good”, though most youth noted challenges relating to learning English. Youth did not specify any resources that assisted them in their transition into a Canadian school, though one youth did comment that he found the support of his teachers to be helpful:

Andrew: The teacher was trying hard to make sure that you learn English and all that. And when I went to the regular school I still got help-- The teacher knew I needed help and all that so-- (Focus Group 2, 680-682).

Can you think of anything that could have been done by the school to make your transition easier? Youth suggested that they be taught more vocabulary through exercises completed during ESL programming. An equal number of youth also suggested that improvements could be made in relation to grading. For example, one youth felt that since grading systems differ between countries, additional time should be spent explaining how the grading system works. Another youth suggested that less emphasis should be placed on grades obtained in ESL programming:

Dennis: One more thing is they should be a little less serious about the mark. When I was in the ESL program the highest mark in our class was just a low eighty. I think that's so serious about the marking a little bit hurts to our confidence (Focus Group 3, 372-374).

Do people drop out or skip a lot?

Recent newcomer youth. There was no consensus as to whether or not students dropped out or skipped a lot. However, youth commonly reflected on their own views and said that skipping was not a good idea. For example:

Debra: I think that when-- Mostly basically when you skip school I don't think it's such a good idea because number one your parents sent you to school to have a better education than they have and you just like put it away and you don't really care about education you just care about other things in life that don't

benefit you. But basically if it was for me skipping's not good because education come first more than anything (Focus Group 3, 388-392).

First generation youth. There was also no consensus among first generation youth as to whether or not students dropped out or skipped a lot. Youth commented that students only dropped out or skipped once in awhile, students do not drop out or skip, and students do not drop out or skip as often as in previous years. However, first generation youths' responses were different in that these youth did not discuss skipping as not being a good idea.

What do you think makes people drop out or skip?

Recent newcomer youth. Youth felt that parents played a role in a youth's decision about whether or not to skip class:

Amy: ...If I skip I'm going to have to tell my parents cause there's a conscious that's probably eating me away, so I'm going to have to tell my parents either way. And if they know I'm skipping they probably won't like it so I try not to skip (Focus Group 2, 845-848).

Youth also felt that friends influenced a youth's decision to skip class or drop out of school.

First generation youth. Youth expressed the desire to get a break from school as a reason to skip class.

What role do parents play in kids attending school/finishing school? The most common response provided by youth was that parents played a large role in youth attending school or finishing school. More specifically, youth said that parents expected them to attend school and/or they would get into trouble if they did not attend school. For example, when asked if parents play a role in kids attending/finishing school, one youth replied:

Amy: It's like predetermined (Focus Group 2, 985).

Youth also said that parents set an example for their children, ultimately it is the youths' decision whether or not to attend school or finish school, and that their parents wanted them to receive a better education than they did.

What role do teachers play in kids attending school/finishing school? Youth replied that given the amount of time spent in school, teachers are important figures in a student's life and are able to influence a student's decision to attend school or finish school by providing them with advice. However, these same respondents noted that it was the choice of the student whether or not to take the teacher's advice. For example, as one youth explained:

Debra: ...They just want to influence kids maybe from the bad stuff but in some cases the teacher might tell you the right stuff to do but maybe you don't want to take the advice and it's your choice whether to take it or not (Focus Groups 3, 555-557).

Youth reported that a teacher's "bad attitude" could be a factor in a youth's decision to not attend class. Examples included being too strict in regards to enforcing rules, demonstrating a lack of enthusiasm, and not assisting students when they do not understand the material being taught.

What role do friends play in kids attending school/finishing school? The most common response to this question was that friends were able to influence a youth's decision to attend and finish school. One youth commented:

Debra: Maybe they can just like talk to you like-- And just say like education is better and don't skip school just don't go to friend's house. Just influence things so that you will not do it (Focus Group 3, 464-465).

However, youth also felt that it was a youth's own choice whether or not to attend school.

For example:

Dan: I think it's really the opinion of the own person to skip like the friend can tell them to they can influence their decisions but it's very much on the person that if he wants to go by the decision that he decides whether it is good or bad (Focus Group 3, 479-481).

What do you think of the current programs or resources provided by the school for newcomer youth? Youth reported that the current resources were "good". Specifically, the Career Resource Center and opportunities for youth to get involved within the school were noted. Comparisons can once again be found between the education system of a newcomer youth's home country and Canada. As shared by one youth:

Daryl: I think schools are good right now and sure have more facilities than they had in my country you know safety and everything (Focus Group 3, 585-586).

Can you think of any programs or resources that the school could offer that you would find beneficial? Youth provided multiple suggestions in response to this question. For instance, youth proposed providing students more volunteer opportunities, additional cultural activities, greater assistance with learning English, and information on how to gain citizenship.

Do you plan on finishing school? All youth said that they planned on finishing school.

What do you plan to do once you're finished high school? Upon completing secondary school, all youth indicated that they planned to attend either college or university.

Will you stay in your community? The most common response provided by youth was that they do not intend to stay in their community. The reason all these youth provided was that they were considering returning to their or their parents' home country:

Andrew: Maybe like stay a little bit after education and then go back home and start a family there (Focus Group 2, 1158-1159).

However, some youth also responded that they would like to remain in their community, as their parents would be close by to offer their support when needed. The youths' decision to stay or leave their current community did not appear to be related to their age.

Do you feel valued in your communities and your school? In what ways and in what ways do you not? When responding to this question, the majority of youth discussed being valued in relation to their relationships with their peers in school.

Positive reflections of peer relationships included ease in making new friends and support provided by peers. For example:

Dennis: Yes I do. Just now I said I was the [names student council position]. When I was competing with other candidates students were-- Students supports me very much on that day so I think I was-- I think I am very valued in the school (Focus Group 3, 683-685).

Negative reflections of peer relationships provided by youth included difficulty making new friends or feeling like they do not belong:

Amy: I never felt right sitting in the cafeteria. It's just everyone's there, they have their own group. We always sit and eat in the halls because somehow we don't feel like we don't belong (Focus Group 2, 1236-1237).

How do you think multiculturalism applies here? Youth reported that their schools were multicultural. While some of these youth who responded simply stated that their schools were multicultural, the rest of these youth elaborated on why they felt this was so. For example:

Daryl: Yea because we have people from around different parts of the world (Focus Group 3, 721).

Amy: In China you don't have multiculturalism in classes. And then I went to a Catholic public school in elementary and I was the only Asian in the class so

coming here I saw a lot of other Asians and well people from Middle Eastern or from Africa, so for me it's really multi diverse (Focus Group 2, 1350-1352).

What kinds of attitudes do you think there are towards immigration in the school and in the community? Youth felt that overall, their communities' attitudes towards immigration were good. For example:

Dennis: Um the school treat the immigration or no matter what kind of purpose you're here the school treats us very well. I haven't feel any pre-- Um-- Discrimination (Focus Group 3, 727-728).

One youth discussed that although overall he felt that attitudes towards immigration were good in his community, there were individuals who possessed negative attitudes in every community:

Dan: In my opinion it's-- Overall it has been good. But there are both kinds of people in every society. There are also good and bad so sometimes there's bad attitudes (Focus Group 3, 736-737).

When answering this question, newcomer youth also frequently talked about attitudes towards immigration in terms of the quality of their friendships.

How much would you say you know about the issues that face newcomer youth? What would you say the issues are? Youth cited varying issues of diversity that they and other newcomer youth faced. The most common issue was homesickness:

Dennis: ...Because sometimes we will miss our home countries-- Yea that's home sickness right-- This kind of thing happens (Focus Group 3, 802-803).

Other issues included attempting to learn English and lack of knowledge about how to obtain a driver's license.

Do you think that Canada's school system and curriculum reflect all of the people who live in Canada? Some youth felt that yes, Canada's school systems and curriculum did reflect all of the people who live in Canada, though some youth also felt

that no, the curriculum was not reflective. Interestingly, one youth shared his view that the curriculum need not be reflective of everyone:

Dennis: It's hard to say because-- But I think it still reflects most of us because for the people who is in school now they will get into the society later in their life so they are just Canadian-- They are just Canadian citizens in the future who I have to be-- Who I have to be-- Communicate with. So I think it will reflect that (Focus Group 3, 851-854).

The youth in this particular focus group were then asked what could be done to make the curriculum more reflective of the students, to which this same youth then responded:

Dennis: I think schools don't have to really reflect-- Reflect everyone in the society. We have to learn something from the society in our future. If school reflects everything then that's not real. We have to learn something from society (Focus Group 3, 874-876).

Thematic Coding

Educational experiences. Youths' positive or negative comments about their educational experiences, as well as whether or not they had ever skipped class, were used as indicators of their overall enjoyment of school. The responses provided by youth in the current study seem to suggest that recent newcomer youth viewed their educational experiences as being more positive than first generation youth.

Recent newcomer youth. Throughout the focus groups, youth shared comments indicating that they enjoyed school. For example:

Dan: So far it has been a good experience (Focus Group 3, 217).

Recent newcomer youth also reported not ever having skipped class before. Interestingly, they were often found to position their educational experiences in Canada against previous educational experiences had in their home country. For example:

Dennis: I think my school experience is also pretty good comparing to the school experience in China. Here we have much more-- Less in the amount of school

work so when I was in China I had no time to play after school but here I have (Focus Group 3, 229-231).

First generation youth. Youth shared comments that suggested that they did not enjoy school. For example, when asked what things they would most like to change about school, one youth said:

Alex: Don't get me started.

I: Oh you can get started.

Alex: I don't really like the school. I dunno, it's just, I don't know (Focus Group 2, 482-486).

In addition, many first generation youth reported that they had skipped class on at least one occasion.

Importance of education. Despite the differences in responses recent newcomer youth and first generation youth provided to some of the previous questions, at some point in the focus groups both groups commonly discussed the importance of receiving a better education than their parents were able:

Debra: They could tell you that they want you to have a better education than them but they don't want you to go through what they went through in life so-- (Focus Group 3, 491-493)

Youth also felt that education has the potential to lead to a better life:

Daryl: Right now in Canada we have a shortage of doctors so if the children don't skip they can have a better education and they can-- They might be a doctor if they don't skip (Focus Group 4, 506-508).

Finally, youth spoke to education as being a priority in their lives:

Debra: ...Education come first more than anything (Focus Group 3, 392).

School and community involvement. Despite the youths' common assertion regarding the importance of education, the youths' discussion of their involvement within both school and the wider community differed. As it was the intent of the current study to

highlight the diversity in these youths' educational experiences, possible differences in their patterns of involvement within the education system was an important finding. Upon thematic coding of the youths' responses, school and community involvement was identified as a theme and the differential involvement of the following two groups was noted.

Within the focus groups, youth who either referred to Canada as "home" or planned on remaining in Canada were found to spontaneously discuss their involvement within their school and community in response to the questions asked. For example:

Amy: ...Our family is a host family to new immigrants from other countries and I guess we help them out a lot bringing them into the community. We have different activities at YMCA for new immigrants so I'm pretty sure they feel really accepted (Focus Group 2, 1424-1426).

In contrast, youth who referred to their or their parents' home country as "home" and considered relocating there did not discuss their involvement within their schools and communities in response to the questions asked. This finding was interesting as the decision to refer to Canada as "home" and remain was not consistent with the length of time the youth had been in Canada.

Chapter Four: Study One Discussion

This study supported what has been demonstrated in the literature regarding challenges faced by newcomer youth and offered examples of the diversity present within their experiences, such as the finding that recent newcomer youth shared a greater number of positive educational experiences than first generation youth. Likewise, diversity was also illustrated in the finding that youth who referred to their or their parents' home country as "home" and planned to relocate did not discuss their involvement within their school or the wider community to the same extent as youth who referred to Canada as "home" or planned to remain in Canada. This latter finding led to the development of Study 2. Implications of these findings are discussed in the final chapter.

The current study focused on three research questions. The first research question concerned challenges that newcomer youth experience within the education system; the second asked youth what resources are helpful in overcoming these challenges; while the third asked what additional resources should be offered. When questioned about the challenges faced by newcomer youth, the participating youth reported many challenges consistent with the existing literature. These challenges included the experience of homesickness (as cited in Watt et al., 1996) and language barriers (as cited in Wadsworth et al., 2008).

In regards to overcoming challenges, programs and resources were also shown to be important. In concordance with the existing literature, youth indicated that a supportive adult such as a guardian (as cited in Watt et al., 1996) or a teacher (as cited in Anisef & Kilbride, 2001; Ryan & Patrick, 2001; Watt et al., 1996) is helpful. Also, youth

pointed to the amount of time spent in school as an explanation for their belief that a supportive teacher is of importance (as cited in Han, 2008). In addition, having someone to explain pertinent information such as grading systems was proposed (as cited in Watt et al., 1996). Youth also provided additional suggestions to assist them within the education system. For instance, newcomer youth proposed a greater number of volunteer opportunities as well as cultural activities be available to them to better their educational experience. These latter suggestions correspond with research indicating that involvement in social activities enhances newcomers' school adjustment and social competence (Chen & Tse, 2010).

Despite the challenges youth reported experiencing within the education system as well as the supports they felt were lacking, the importance of education was commonly discussed. When asked what brought them to Canada, youth generally responded with "education", corresponding with the theme of the importance of education. Youth not only indicated that they planned on completing secondary school and pursuing their education at the postsecondary level, but also discussed: (a) the importance of obtaining a better education than their parents were able to, (b) the possibility that education could lead to a better life, and (c) education as a priority in their lives. The importance placed on receiving an education is consistent with the immigrant drive hypothesis as proposed by Portes and Rumbaut (2001). In addition, as previously discussed, Watt and colleagues (1996) found that youths' expectation that they would complete secondary school and the ambition to achieve a career or admittance into a postsecondary institution assisted these youth in overcoming their challenges and completing secondary school. Given that similar responses were provided by youth who participated in the current study, it is

hoped that these same factors will also assist these youth in their goal of completing secondary school.

The current study also highlighted the diversity between recent newcomer youth and first generation youth in regards to their perceptions of their educational experiences, as first generation youth were found to discuss more negative educational experiences than recent newcomer youth and skipped classes to a greater extent. In this respect, the experiences of first generation youth could more closely resemble the experiences of mainstream youth. Likewise, it is possible that since first generation youth do not have an alternative education system with which to compare their current educational experiences to, they therefore shared a greater number of negative educational experiences. For example, consider the case of Andrew who, as presented in the results section, discussed being hit back in his home country when he failed to complete his assigned homework. Given the previous hardships that Andrew endured in the education system of his home country, it could be that the current challenges Andrew experiences in Canada's education system do not seem particularly salient in comparison, and therefore not worth discussing. However, first generation youth may perceive experiencing a greater number of negative educational experiences given that these youth have no experiences in alternative education systems with which to compare their current realities to, while recent newcomer youths' previous experiences in their home countries may mitigate how they perceive their current educational experiences. Note that this proposal is not to suggest that the concerns of first generation youth are not as valid as the concerns of their newcomer youth school peers, rather perhaps recent newcomer youth are more tolerant of injustices and/or less likely to discuss them because of their previous experiences.

Diversity was also found within the responses of recent newcomer youth. The responses provided in the focus groups indicated that their schools are multicultural and that overall they feel valued within their communities. However, one youth suggested that it was the responsibility of newcomer youth to adapt to Canadian society when asked if he thought Canada's school system and curriculum reflect all of the people who live in Canada. Such responses do not seem cohesive and could therefore benefit from further exploration.

Further exploration is also needed in regards to the finding that youth who referred to Canada as "home" or planned to stay in Canada discussed their school and community involvement, while those youth who referred to their or their parents' home country as "home" and considered returning did not. It is possible that such differences may be partially attributed to the reason why the youth or their parents left their home country. For example, perhaps youth who refer to their or their parents' home country as "home" and consider returning view residing in Canada as temporary and therefore do not feel the need to become involved within their school and the wider community to the same extent as other youth. However this is but one possibility, which requires further examination. Future research should also directly inquire why youth or their parents left their home country. In addition, future research should ask youth their religion, as previous research has found that religion can influence the cultural identity profile youth belong to, with youth belonging to the ethnic profile preferring to participate in the cultural practices of their home country (Berry et al., 2006).

Though a measure of cultural identity was not completed in this study as it was outside of the scope of the research questions, cultural identity may be of particular

interest as youth in the current study appear to be identifying more strongly with either their or their parents' home country or Canada, which is perhaps reflective of their cultural identity. Previous research has found that in terms of cultural identity, youth who receive a high score on a measure of their ethnic identity of their home country as well as on a measure of national identity of their host country are better adapted psychologically and socioculturally (Berry et al., 2006), therefore illustrating the need to further understand why youth take on the cultural identity profile they do.

As illustrated in this discussion, diversity was found in the responses of the newcomer youth, further demonstrating that they are not a homogenous group; rather, they are a group who experience different challenges within the education system and may benefit from the availability of different resources to address these challenges. In addition, the responses provided by these youth also prompted further questions. Hence a second study was designed to replicate the findings of Study 1 with a greater number of participants, as well as to explore an additional research question which emerged in this first study that may serve to further illustrate the diversity present within the newcomer youth population. Upon reflecting on the responses provided by the youth in the current study, it is thought that perhaps the youths' differential discussion of their involvement within their school and the wider community is reflective of their or their parents' reason for emigrating from their home country. For example, perhaps youth who or whose parents left for fear-based reasons are involved within their school and community to a lesser extent as they may not recognize the value of such involvement if they left their home country out of necessity and view residing in Canada as temporary. However, youth who or whose parents left for reasons concerning their social mobility may be

engaged within their school and community to a greater extent because they anticipate remaining in Canada and such involvement is reflective of their goal of social mobility.

Chapter Five: Study Two Methods

Design

Ethics approval was gained from both Brock University (06-286) and the school board in which the research was conducted. Qualitative methodology was the primary approach for this study although some paper and pencil measures of ethnic and national identity were also incorporated. In addition to using focus groups as a method of data collection as in Study 1, it was decided to also provide youth with the opportunity to participate in a follow up individual interview because though it was hoped that the presence of youths' peers in a focus group would assist in them being comfortable, some youth may wish to disclose additional information to the researcher in private.

Furthermore, the individual interview would allow time to further explore issues brought forth by youth in Study 1, which may have been too time-consuming in a group setting.

Participants

Research was conducted in secondary schools within the same school board as in Study 1. Any student was eligible to participate in this study as long as both the student and his/her guardian (if under the age of 18) had signed and returned a consent form (see Appendix D). Specifically, male and female recent newcomer youth ($n = 10$) and first generation youth ($n = 7$) were sought out to take part in this study. However, no student was turned away and therefore participants also included mainstream youth ($n = 7$).

Youth once again chose to identify by providing a description of where they or their parents were from and how long they had been in Canada, and thus were grouped according to their generational status. In addition, as it was the aim of this study to replicate the findings of Study 1, this was a necessary grouping. See Table 5.1 for a

summary of the recent newcomer and first generation youths' demographics. Youth were also grouped according to the reason they provided for why they or their parents left their home country, as the current study intended to examine the diversity in the responses of these two groups (see Table 5.2 and Table 5.3).

Table 5.1

Participants' demographics

	Age	Recent newcomer or first generation	Home country	Months in Canada	Completed ESL programming
Focus group 1	16 = 5 17 = 1	First generation = 5 Recent newcomer = 1	China = 2 England = 1 Guyana = 1 India = 2	96 = 1 N/A = 5	N/A = 6
Focus group 2	16 = 1	Recent newcomer = 1	China = 1	101 = 1	Yes = 1
Focus group 3	16 = 1 18 = 2	First generation = 1 Recent newcomer = 2	Jordan = 1 Pakistan = 1 Somalia = 1	36 = 1 60 = 1 N/A = 1	Yes = 2 N/A = 1
Focus group 4	15 = 3 16 = 1 18 = 2 21 = 1	Recent newcomer = 7	Afghanistan = 1 China = 1 Guyana = 1 India = 3 Vietnam = 1	18 = 2 24 = 2 30 = 1 54 = 1 Not sure = 1	Currently = 7

Table 5.2

Participants' demographics

	Importance of religion	Connections to home country	Waiting for others	Knew people in Canada	Neighborhood
Social mobility	Extremely important = 5	Clothing = 1	No = 9	No = 2	Diverse = 3
	Very important = 3	Communication = 3	Yes = 2	Yes = 9	Mostly white = 5
	Not very important = 2	Decoration = 3	Did not respond = 1	Unknown = 1	Did not respond = 1
	Not important = 1	Food = 7			
	Did not respond = 1	Religion = 1			
Fear-based reasons		Visits = 5			
		Yes = 1			
	Extremely important = 3	Communication = 1	No = 2	No = 2	Diverse = 3
	Very important = 1	Food = 3	Yes = 3	Yes = 3	Mostly white = 1
	Not important = 1	Language = 1			Did not respond = 1
		Music = 1			
		Visit = 2			
		Yes = 1			

Table 5.3

Participants' demographics

	Mother's education	Occupation	Change in job	Father's education	Occupation	Change in job
Social mobility	High school = 3 College = 6 University = 2 Did not respond = 1	Casino worker = 1 Factory worker = 3 Family business = 1 Supervisor = 1 Support worker = 1 Teacher = 1 Not working = 4	Decrease = 4 Increase or no change = 1	High school = 4 College = 2 University = 4 Did not respond = 1 Unknown = 1	Casino worker = 1 Chef = 1 Engineer = 2 Family business = 2 Laborer = 2 Medical company = 1 Truck driver = 1	Decrease = 1 Increase or no change = 7 Not in Canada = 1 Previous job unknown = 3
Fear-based reasons	Elementary = 1 High school = 1 University = 1 Did not respond = 1 Unknown = 1	Factory worker = 1 Translator = 1 Not working = 1 Not in Canada = 2	Decrease = 2 N/A = 2 Previous employment unknown = 1	College = 1 University = 2 Did not respond = 2	Engineer = 1 Supervisor = 1 Not working = 2 Not in Canada = 1	Decrease = 2 Increase or no change = 1 N/A = 1 Previous job unknown = 1

Note. Under the column "change in job", decrease refers to a decrease in social status generally associated with a profession between one's previous job in their home country and one's current job in Canada.

Materials

Demographic questionnaire. Youth were asked to complete the demographic questionnaire (see Appendix E), which was developed to obtain information on their parents' background and their personal involvement in their school and the wider community.

Focus group guide. Youth were orally asked questions from the focus group guide, concerning their educational experiences. The majority of the questions were open-ended; for example, youth were asked what their favourite things about school are and what helps them stay in school. Though many of these questions were the same as those asked in Study 1, additional questions were added as youth in Study 1 discussed the quality of their relationships with parents and peers in response to many of the focus group guide questions, therefore suggesting that these relationships were particularly salient in terms of their perceptions of their school experiences. For example, youth were asked about disagreements they had with their parents concerning their choice of clothes, friends and the things they did for fun. Youth were also asked how important they felt it was to listen to their parents in regards to such matters. See Appendix F for a complete list of the questions posed to the youth.

Measure of cultural identity. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) and the York Ethnic Identification Scale (YETI) were used to gain a measure of the youths' cultural identity, with the prior measuring ethnic identity and the latter measuring Canadian identity. A high score on each of these measures would represent the integration profile of cultural identity. Though the same measure could have been used for both ethnic identity and national identity, two separate measures were decided upon

as the MEIM allowed for youth to self-identify their ethnic identity, whereas the YETI specifically assessed the youths' Canadian identity (while also providing youth the opportunity to indicate that they did not identify as being Canadian).

The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM). The MEIM was developed by Phinney (1992) and is composed of 14 items to provide an overall measure of ethnic identity ($\alpha = .81$) as well as 6 items to provide a measure of other group orientation ($\alpha = .71$) (items 4, 7, 9, 15, 17 and 19). Questions for the overall measure of ethnic identity are based on positive ethnic attitudes and a sense of belonging, ethnic identity achievement, and ethnic behaviours and practices. Examples of questions include "I am happy to be a member of the group I belong to", "I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means to me" and "I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group", respectively. See Appendix G for a list of all questions posed to participants. All questions were measured using a 4-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 4 representing "strongly agree". To obtain an overall measure of ethnic identity, the individual items were summed together (with items 8 and 10 being reverse scored).

York Ethnic Identification Scale (YETI). The YETI was developed by Cameron, Sato, Lay and Lalonde (1997) and is composed of 30 items to provide an overall measure of ethnic identity ($\alpha = .89$); specifically it was used to assess a participant's acculturation within Canadian society or his/her national identity. Questions are based on centrality, affect and in-group ties. Centrality measures how important being a member of the group is for a participant by asking questions such as, "Being Canadian has very little to do about how I feel about myself". Affect measures a participant's feelings about being a

member of the group by asking questions such as “I feel good when I think about myself as Canadian”. Finally, in-group ties measures the bond a participant feels with the group by asking questions such as, “I feel I have a lot in common with other Canadians”. See Appendix H for a list of all questions posed to participants. All questions were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 representing “strongly agree”. The participant’s responses to each question were summed together to obtain an overall measure of Canadian identity (with items 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27 and 29 being reverse scored).

Interview guide. Youth were asked questions from the interview guide (see Appendix I), intended to gain the youths’ insights on comments shared in previous focus groups by previous participants. The questions were open-ended; for example, youth were asked if they thought it might be hard for youth who have always planned on returning to their or their parents’ home country to feel like Canada is “home” and why this might be.

Procedure

Focus groups. Four focus groups were conducted consisting of 10, 1, 3 and 7 youth, respectively. Focus groups were conducted in much the same manner as in Study 1, with the exception of youth being asked to complete the demographic questionnaire. Youth received a \$25 gift certificate from Indigo for their participation in addition to a feedback letter (see Appendix J). At this time, youth were also provided the opportunity to sign up for a follow up interview should they wish to.

Interviews. Youth signed up to participate in an interview during their lunch hour, spare period or during class if they had received permission from their teacher to do

so (which was communicated to the researcher by the teacher). Six individual interviews were conducted as well as one group interview at the request of the youth ($n = 5$).

Participants included recent newcomer youth ($n = 8$), first generation youth ($n = 2$), and a mainstream youth ($n = 1$). Interviews were conducted in a private location on school grounds and approximately 30 minutes in length, to minimize disruption to the youths' school day. In addition to the facilitator, an assistant also attended each focus group, whose responsibilities included filming the session.

At the beginning of each interview the consent form was once again reviewed and reminders were provided. Youth were then asked to complete the MEIM and YETI. Next, youth were asked questions from the interview guide. Once all questions were addressed, each youth received a \$25 gift certificate from Indigo for his/her participation in addition to a feedback letter (see Appendix J).

Data Analysis

Demographic questionnaires. Demographic questions were used to look at differences between youth or youth whose parents left their home country for fear-based versus those who left for social mobility reasons, in terms of their involvement within the school and the wider community.

Focus group guide questions. Youths' responses from all focus groups were analyzed in the same manner as in Study 1. However, the responses of youth who left their or their parents' home country for fear-based versus those who left for social mobility reasons were also compared. Finally, through the use of thematic coding, two themes emerged: (a) education experiences, and (b) the importance of education.

Interview guide questions. Youths' responses from all interviews were analyzed in the same manner as the focus groups, though responses provided by sub-groups of youth were not compared given that the youth participated in smaller numbers.

MEIM and YETI. Independent samples t-tests were conducted on the MEIM and the YETI.

Chapter Six: Study Two Results

The results will be presented in the same manner as in Study 1.

Demographic Questionnaires

Do you participate in any cultural groups or make use of any resources provided to people who are new to Canada?

Social mobility. The majority of these youth reported taking part in a cultural group or making use of a resource for individuals who are new to Canada. For example, responses included “Punjabi dance”, “YMCA immigrant parties” and the “YMCA immigrant picnic”.

Fear-based. Fewer of these youth reported participating in a cultural group or making use of a resource for individuals who are new to Canada. For example, only one youth responded attending the “multicultural festival”.

Do you take part in any other clubs/groups/teams or volunteer?

Social mobility. The majority of these youth reported taking part in some other club, group, team, or volunteering. Examples included playing soccer, badminton and volunteering at the SPCA.

Fear-based. Some of these youth also reported participating in some other club, group, team or volunteering, though fewer. One example included volunteering at a nursing home.

Focus Group Guide Questions

What brought you to Canada? Youth reported that they or their parents chose to come to Canada specifically because of the ability to gain citizenship. As one youth explained:

Julia: Canada's easier to get into than the US (Focus Group 2, 41).

Youth also noted that Canada was open to diversity:

Ken: With citizenship you're more respected then in other places (Focus Group, 164).

Lachlin: ...And the people are rude to you and when the police ask you you have to give them the money and it's not a good life [referring to the country he went to before coming to Canada] that's why we came here (Focus Group 4, 1256-1258).

Interestingly, one youth replied:

Len: My family chose to come here so-- (Focus Group 4, 1324).

Do you/your parents plan to stay in Canada?

Social mobility. The majority of youth responded that they planned to stay in Canada. One of these youth indicated that he would like to visit his home country though:

Luke: Maybe a visit (Focus Group 4, 1331).

However, some youth did report that they wished to return to their home country.

The following youth indicated their reasons for wanting to return to their home country:

Lindon: I just-- I feel like-- In Canada I don't feel like I'm at home (Focus Group 4, 1365).

Lisa: ... I would be more comfortable (Focus Group 4, 1382).

One youth also responded that he thought about returning to his home country possibly when he's older.

Fear-based. The majority of youth thought about returning to their or their parents' home country. Interestingly, some of these youth vocalized that their desire to return to their home country depends on if the living conditions within their home country improve. For example:

Keegan: It depends.

I: It depends.

Keegan: Yea. Like if it gets better you know like where we're living (Focus Group 3, 184-188).

Lachlin: I think maybe... But the war I think is never going to finish (Focus Group 4, 1342-1343).

However, one of these youth did reply that she planned on staying in Canada.

Interestingly, this youth was a first generation youth.

What are your favourite things about school?

Recent newcomer youth. Youth most often named courses they particularly enjoyed as being their favourite things about school. For instance:

Lance: Gym.

I: Gym.

Lance: Art and gym (Focus Group 4, 55-59).

Finally, youth discussed the presence of choice, specifically the different course options available to them as well as the freedom to dress how they want. One youth noted that this sort of freedom did not occur in the schools of her home country. Youth also talked about spending time with their friends as something they like about school.

First generation youth. Only one first generation youth chose to answer this question, to which she replied spending time with friends:

Ingrid: To be around your friends (Focus Group 1, 169).

What things would you most like to change about school?

Recent newcomer youth. Youth discussed physical features of the school, including the inadequate size of the parking lot as well as the slow internet access. As one youth explained:

Luke: The internet... Like high speed internet. It's very slow (Focus Group 4, 105-109).

Youth also discussed the need for greater teacher involvement, in terms of assistance with English and encouragement to achieve higher grades:

Julia: I'd say it's a little too loose in some ways. I think the teacher should pressure the students to do better (Focus Group 2, 93-94).

First generation youth. First generation youth did not respond similarly to this question, with one youth commenting that he disliked certain school rules and another commenting that the school day was too long:

Ian: A shorter school day (Focus Group 1, 200).

What was the transition into a Canadian school like? The most common response provided by youth to this question was that the transition was good. The following youth's response illustrates this sentiment:

Leo: It's easy. It's the same (Focus Group 4, 177).

However, one youth elaborated to explain that the transition was good at least partially as a result of the support he received in his new school:

Luke: They compromise with us (Focus Group 4, 164).

However, youth also replied that they experienced academic and social challenges during their transitions, as illustrated by the following examples:

Julia: They did have a personal helper for me who sat beside me during class but that doesn't help when she doesn't speak your language either. Even though she was of Asian background she didn't speak the language so it didn't help much (Focus Group 2, 101-103).

Issy: It was difficult at first because everyone wanted to hear the accent and then everybody would mock the accent (Focus Group 1, 1062-1063).

Are there any programs or resources that helped make your transition easier? Youth noted the following programs and resources as aiding their transition into a Canadian school: the Career Resource Center, Guidance Department, the use of small group work in classes, contact with students who have had similar experiences, the opportunity to speak one's first language, the educational assistant and the YMCA's programs and resources (such as the HOST program).

Can you think of anything that could have been done by the school to make your transition easier? One youth suggested that greater access to the assistance of the educational assistant during class would be particularly helpful to him:

Lachlin: No when the teacher is talking [names educational assistant] she explain like what she say and different if you don't understand she explain a different way. It's helped (Focus Group 4, 262-263).

This youth also explained that the educational assistant's help would be beneficial not only during ESL programming but also in mainstream classes.

Do you find that people drop out or skip a lot? Have you ever skipped?

Recent newcomer youth. Youth reported seeing other students skip a lot, however they did not know a lot of students who had dropped out. Only a few of these youth themselves reported skipping on a regular basis. Some other youth reported that they had skipped on one occasion before or had arrived late to class, though cited health reasons or finishing an assignment as an explanation for their behaviour.

First generation youth. Likewise, one first generation youth also commented that he felt that students skipped a lot, although none of the youth reported that a lot of students dropped out of school. However, unlike recent newcomer youth, many first generation youth reported that they themselves skip on a regular basis.

What do you think makes people drop out or skip? Why do you skip?

Recent newcomer youth. Youth chose to respond to this question by sharing reasons why they had skipped class. All of the youth who reported skipping on only one occasion or arriving to class late provided reasons for doing so which related to health concerns or completing an assignment. However, the youth who did not specify that they had only skipped or been late to class on once, explained that their decision to not attend class often related to what was happening in class that day or needing to complete an assignment. For instance:

Keegan: It depends on the day. Like if we're having class watching movies, eating popcorn you know you guys aren't doing nothing important. They're just watching movies, eating popcorn and there's just two or three kids in the class (Focus Group 3, 422-424).

Ken: If there's a project due and you're not ready skip it and hand it in at the end of the day (Line 435, Focus Group 4).

First generation youth. First generation youth also chose to respond to this question by sharing reasons why they themselves skipped. All of the youth who answered this question responded that their choice depended on what was going on in class. However, one youth also said that his friends' actions influenced his decision to skip class:

Kyle: Sometimes if one of my friends is going to go do something would I rather be sitting in a class or playing basketball. I'd rather choose the fun thing than sitting in the class doing nothing (Focus Group 3, 428-429).

Ida: ... Just to get out of class... It's boring (Focus Group 1, 327 and 345).

Do you plan on finishing school? All youth had plans to complete secondary school.

What role do parents play in whether you attend school/finish school? The youth spoke of their parents' belief that education should be a priority as well as the expectation that they would go to school. For example:

Lisa: My mom and dad say education should come first more than anything (Focus Group 4, 532).

Additionally, some youth commented that their parents had not had the opportunity to attend school:

Keegan: Like you got something that they never had you know (Focus Group 3, 556).

Finally, youth noted that they attended class as they did not want to disappoint their parents:

Julia: They've become more lenient in high school but I just have a sense of if I don't do well I disappoint my parents. They're not pressuring me right now saying you know you need to have a ninety-five it's just that I don't feel good if I don't reach up to that. I feel like I'll disappoint them (Focus Group 2, 190-192).

What role do teachers play in whether you attend school/finish school? The youth felt that if a teacher was helpful, they were more likely to attend this teacher's class. One youth shared his idea of how it was that teachers may be particularly helpful to students:

Leo: They'll stay late after school so that if you have any problems with your homework or you don't understand anything you can come after school and ask them (Focus Group 4, 571-572).

The next most common response was that when a teacher made his/her class interesting, youth were more likely to attend that class:

Julia: I have to say that some teachers make their classes very interesting and that makes me so eager to want to go to class (Focus Group 2, 204-205).

Lastly, youth noted that when they felt as though a teacher cared about them, they were

more likely to attend that teacher's class.

What role do friends play in whether you attend school/finish school? The most common response to this question was that the behaviours of the youths' classmates could influence their desire to attend a particular class. For example, if their classmates were friendly, the youth reported that they were more likely to attend. Conversely, if the youth had no friends in the class, they were less likely to attend. As one youth explained:

Leo: If you don't have any friends you don't want to go (Focus Group 4, 600).

In addition, the youth also explained that friends could influence their decision to skip class. For example:

Kyle: If the other friend is doing something like really fun you want to join him right rather than just sitting in class (Focus Group 3, 662-663).

What do you plan to do once you're finished high school? All youth planned to attend a post secondary institution.

Who are your friends in the school/community? In response to this question, youth replied that they had a diverse group of friends, or more generally they were friends with "anybody":

Isaac: I'm friends with anybody (Focus Group 1, 588).

One youth further explained that his friendships were based on commonly held interests:

Ian: People with common interests (Focus Group 1, 582).

Some of these youth explained that it was possible to learn from a diverse group of friends:

Irene: I have a pretty diverse group of friends. I think it's interesting to have like diverse people around you because you can learn from them (Focus Group 1, 560-561).

Luke: Like something you don't know they can tell you (Focus Group 4, 657).

Though most youth discussed having a diverse group of friends, some did report being friends with other youth of similar backgrounds. However, as the following quote illustrates, this could also be based on similar interests:

Issy: And another group and I suppose that it is entirely made up of people who are new to Canada. And it's mostly for school though because this is awful to say but they're more focused on getting perfect grades (Focus Group 1, 547-549).

Do you find it difficult to become friends with students of another ethnicity?

Some of the youth did report finding it difficult to become friends with youth of another ethnicity, whether it was because it was harder to initially approach the individual or harder to maintain such friendships, as demonstrated in the following examples:

Leo: It's harder to go talk to them (Focus Group 4, 675).

Julia: But I do find it easier when it's with Asians. Even if they were born in Canada I find it easier in some ways... We're girls we like to complain and usually or complaining comes from school, homework, stuff like that. Most Asians push their students-- Push their kids a lot more than others. So we kinda relate on that fact that "oh my parents are telling me to do this again". So that complaining helps each other a lot. We understand what we're going through. Some other kids don't understand. They're like "You already have this mark in this class why are you bothering to get even higher?". It's just that for us we need to do better (Focus Group 2, 252-257).

However, other youth did not feel this was the case:

Keegan: I've got a lot of friends who are different. I mean I get along with the person right (Focus Group 3, 733).

Do you feel like you belong or like you're valued when you're at school? In what ways do you and in what ways do you not? The most common response provided by the youth was that they feel like they were valued and they belonged. The following are two particularly insightful examples of why it is the youth feel this way, with one

youth citing the use of surveys by the school and the other youth discussing the presence of other youth of diverse backgrounds:

Luke: Maybe sometimes they print a survey to use, like printing a survey, doing a survey (Focus Group 4, 741).

Kyle: Yea it's a multicultural school with a lot of different people.

I: So that's a reason why you feel like you belong?

Kyle: Yea (Focus Group 3, 771-773).

Other youth felt that it depended on the situation in regards to whether or not they felt valued. Some of these youth felt valued by certain teachers or administrative staff but not others. In addition, one youth felt that whether or not he felt valued depended on what the issue being discussed was:

Kyle: If it doesn't have something to do with what they like to hear they're not going to care (Focus Group 3, 771-775).

Finally, one youth felt that there was some attempt made by the school to obtain the students' input but questioned what was done with this information:

Julia: I'd say they're trying but they're not there yet.

I: What do you mean by that? In what ways are they not there?

Julia: I have heard about our talking locker how we can put whatever we want to say inside the locker and the student council would read it but I've also heard people tell me that they don't go through all that they just put that locker there. I have suggested a few things but none of them come to mind that happened (Focus Group 2, 272-279).

What do you think of the current programs or resources provided by the school for newcomer youth or culturally diverse youth? The most common response provided by the youth was the extra assistance provided by teachers:

Ian: Um most teachers are pretty easy to approach. And if you need it they'll help you if like you don't understand a concept (Focus Group 1, 850-851).

The Student Voice Group was also noted as being beneficial, though the student who brought it up did not actually know how to become a member of the group:

Julia: We have a student voice group but I don't know how to get in it actually. But it's a group of students who meet together maybe once a month or once a week. But they talk about-- They represent-- They would talk about what they're hearing from classes and friends-- Their concerns and they would bring it up to student council (Focus Group 2, 288-291).

Some youth also discussed anti-bullying programs as helpful; however, all of these youth felt improvements to the programs need to be made.

Can you think of any programs or resources that the school could offer that you would find beneficial? Youth provided suggestions in regards to how their school's anti-bullying program could be improved upon. Youth felt that students should continue to wear pink "stop bullying" shirts; however, these shirts should be free to students as many students cannot afford the cost or would rather spend their money on something else. Despite this proposed change, one youth still expressed doubts over the effectiveness of this program:

Lachlin: It doesn't help. You just wear this that's it (Focus Group 4, 894).

In response another youth proposed:

Leo: Make the bully talk to who he bullies to. Make them talk to each other. Make them sit in a room or something and sort out their problems (Focus Group 4, 905-906).

Furthermore, it was suggested that a teacher should be involved in this process to mediate the discussion. This particular group of youth seemed to be in consensus that this would be an effective program to target bullying in their school. Youth also suggested the need for schools to incorporate a greater variety of sports into their athletic programs.

Specifically, youth felt they would benefit from opportunities to play cricket and soccer at school, which are sports traditionally played in their home countries. One youth did comment that he had played cricket once at school:

Luke: It's a different version.

I: It's a different version?

Luke: Like with small bats (Focus Group 4, 793-797).

Introducing these sports into the school's curriculum or extracurricular activities would provide other students with an introduction to these sports. A language tutor was also proposed by one youth, as he felt that having someone who spoke a newcomer's first language as well as English would be of great assistance to someone struggling to learn English.

Do you and your parents ever have disagreements about things you wear, people you want to hang out with or things you want to do for fun? The majority of youth responded that they have disagreements with their parents concerning their choice of friends. Specifically, their friends' attitudes and behaviours were noted as possible reasons why parents may disapprove of the friendship. For example:

Keegan: It depends on who you bring in the house like what kind of friends... If you bring someone who has a bad attitude and stuff they might ask you "Why you hanging out with that guy?" (Focus Group 3, 899-903).

In addition, one youth expressed that her father felt she was maturing too quickly:

Ida: It's like my dad he's very traditional. And he's got that traditional thinking. He's like you Canadians in this Canadian society you develop too quickly I guess you could say (Focus Group 1, 880-881).

Finally, another youth discussed her interests as being the cause of disagreements between her and her parents:

Julia: We do have disagreements about certain interests because I am very artistically, musically based and so those are the subjects that I enjoy more in school. But that's a conflict with my parents because they want the pure academic courses (Focus Group 2, 326-328).

Do you feel it's important to obey your parents when it comes to these things? Many youth replied that they felt it was important to obey their parents in relation to the issues identified above. For example:

Julia: Very important. I have given up all music and art (Focus Group 2, 332).

Other youth felt it was important to obey their parents "up to a point":

Lachlin: Maybe sometimes yes and sometimes no (Focus Group 4, 1055).

What does Canadian society look like to you? Youth reported thinking of Canada overall as being multicultural, however some youth expressed that this perception does change in regards to one's location in Canada. For example, these youth felt that their city was not very diverse:

Irene: I think it depends on where you are. Like [names city] isn't very diverse but if you go to other places like Toronto you can see more different types of people (Focus Group 1, 940-941).

When asked this question, other youth focused on the characteristics of Canada's population, with some youth reporting that some people engage in stereotyping:

Ian: Some places aren't really multicultural like people just normally prefer stereotypes (Focus Group 1, 960).

However, other youth felt that people were "nice", "open" and "respectful". Interestingly, one youth discussed his perception of the area before arriving to Canada as being incorrect:

Lance: Before I came I thought there was igloos and stuff (Focus Group 4, 1101).

What kinds of attitudes do you think there are towards immigration in your school and in your community? Generally, youth seemed to feel that their school and community were accepting of immigration. As explained by one youth:

Julia: I think it's really good. My mom is part of the YMCA... And every year we have a multicultural festival and I think it's really nice because we have performances from all different countries from different continents and we get to try different foods from different countries because we all bring in food, presentations, billboard, just a miss mash of things. And all the people from different countries would perform their traditional dance or music of some kind. And a lot of important people would attend that too (Focus Group 2, 355 and 360-364).

However, some youth did note the presence of stereotypes within their communities.

One youth provided this response based on a discussion some of the mainstream youth were having in regards to their belief that older individuals in the community hold a greater number of stereotypes than younger members of the community:

Ian: ... Like they believe in stereotypes a little more because they're not developing and they're kinda one sided (Focus Group 1, 1033-1034).

Do you feel that your school and community are open to cultural diversity and adapting to the needs of youth of other ethnicities? Most of the youth responded that their schools were open to cultural diversity and adapting to the needs of youth of other ethnicities:

Keegan: Of course... Let's say if you collect all the Muslims in this school-- All together for something. Why not (Focus Group 3, 959-960)?

However, one youth replied that she felt the school did not do an adequate job of adapting to the needs of some youth:

Julia: No. I know a person who moved to Canada when she was in grade 11 and she found it hard. She struggled a lot because this school doesn't offer any ESL programs or anything that could help her English. So she struggled a lot throughout the first semester. And her English was never that great to the end. There's just not that many people to help you (Focus Group 2, 380-383).

Do you think that Canada's school systems and curriculum reflect all of the people who live in Canada? The most common response provided was that Canada's school systems and curriculum were reflective of the diversity within Canada. As expressed by one youth:

Julia: I'd say yes.

I: Yes.

Julia: Here you get to choose your courses and there's so many courses available to reflect different peoples interests. It's talking about everybody's uniqueness like maybe photography. You know you've got the artistic people. And that's really nice (Focus Group 2, 392-398).

However, some youth felt as though some subjects could be more reflective; specifically math was noted in respect to the content and language utilized within the textbook.

Are there any other issues that face youth who are new to Canada or who have immigration in their more recent history that haven't yet been mentioned?

Two different responses were provided to this question. One youth explained that for newcomer youth, the difference in what is expected of you between your home country and host country is an issue. Another youth shared that though some youth are accepting, she felt some youth within her school are "insensitive of different cultures". She reported her school as having an anti-racism club, though felt there is a lack of student participation within the group.

Thematic Coding

Educational experiences. Results of whether or not youth skipped class regularly as well as responses provided by youth throughout the focus groups were used as indicators of their overall enjoyment of school. The responses provided by these youth

seem to suggest that recent newcomer youth may view their educational experiences as being more positive than first generation youth.

Recent newcomer youth. Only some youth reported skipping class on a regular basis. Interestingly, youth were sometimes found to position their educational experiences in Canada against previous educational experiences they had in their home country:

Julia: I like how open it is actually. Just looking-- Just walking the halls and seeing how everybody is dressed makes me feel good in some way because we don't have to wear uniforms, we're not constrained to no dying hair. I just feel good by seeing all the different cliques and how they dress kind of. It's nice to see that. Everybody is different.

I: And you don't see that much in China?

Julia: No way. Same hair cut, no way could you dye your hair (Focus Group 2, 76-83).

First generation youth. Many youth reported that they had skipped class on at least one occasion. In addition, in comparison to the response provided by the above recent newcomer youth, a first generation youth shared the following:

Kyle: The hat rule's pretty stupid. I don't like that one (Focus Group 3, 320).

Some of the youth provided comments suggesting that they did not enjoy school. For example, one youth shared:

Ida: It's boring (Focus Group 1, 345).

Importance of education. Despite the differences in responses youth were found to provide to the above questions, youth commonly discussed the importance of education throughout the focus groups. Specifically, youth discussed receiving a better education than their parents were able to or than what was available in their or their parents' home country. As expressed by one youth:

Ingrid: Well my parents didn't go to school so now they're like you have to go for

the family. And you *have* to go to school (Focus Group 1, 480-481).

Youth also felt that education has the potential to lead to a better life:

Kyle: You gotta look out for your future right. If you're not going to go-- If you're going to drop out what future are you going to have (Focus Group 3, 468-469)?

Finally, youth spoke to education as being a priority in their lives:

Lachlin: ... School's important (Focus Group 4, 550-551).

School and community involvement. Despite the youths' common emphasis on the importance of education, as previously stated, differences were found in these youths' reported school and community involvement in relation to the reasons the youth provided for having left their home country. As a means to further explore this finding, youth or their parents were identified as having left their home country for fear-based reasons or reasons concerning their social mobility; these youth were also grouped according to whether they referred to their or their parents' home country as "home" and intended to return. Upon comparison of these two groups, the majority of youth who referred to their or their parents' home country as "home" and considered returning reported to have left their home country for fear-based reasons, whereas the majority of youth who referred to Canada as "home" or planned to remain in Canada had left their home country for social mobility reasons, see Table 6.1. Once again, classifications of youth belonging to these two groups were not necessarily consistent with the amount of time a youth had been in Canada. Nor were these classifications consistent with the youths' respective religions.

Table 6.1

Participants' experiences

Name	Group	Reason for leaving	Fits
Issy	Home country as "home"	Social mobility	No
Irene	Canada as "home"	Fear	No
Isaac	Canada as "home"	Social mobility	Yes
Ian	Canada as "home"	Social mobility	Yes
Ida	Canada as "home"	Social mobility	Yes
Ingrid	Canada as "home"	Social mobility	Yes
Julia	Home country as "home"	Fear	Yes
Kyle	Canada as "home"	Social mobility	Yes
Ken	Home country as "home"	Social mobility	No
Keegan	Home country as "home"	Fear	Yes
Lance	Canada as "home"	Social mobility	Yes
Luke	Canada as "home"	Social mobility	Yes
Leo	Canada as "home"	Social mobility	Yes
Lachlin	Home country as "home"	Fear	Yes
Lindon	Home country as "home"	Social mobility	No
Lisa	Home country as "home"	Social mobility	No
Len	Home country as "home"	Fear	Yes

Interview Guide Questions

To follow up on issues such as why a youth may choose to continue to refer to their or their parents' home country as "home", interviews were conducted. These interviews not only allowed for further exploration of the findings of focus groups, but also provided youth an opportunity to share any information they may not have been comfortable sharing in the presence of others.

In past focus groups, many youth referred to their or their parents' home country as "home" even after living in Canada for their entire life or many years, however other youth talked about Canada as being their home even if they had been here for a couple years or just a few months. Why do you think this may be? The

most common response provided by youth was that their decision to refer to Canada as “home” depended on their experience in Canada.

Leo: Maybe they like their life in Canada better than in their own country (Interview 5, 49).

While sometimes this was positioned in relation to their experience in their home country, this was not always the case. For instance:

Luke: ... If they have friends here they might be Canadian (Interview 5, 40).

Note that the decision to refer to Canada as “home” did not necessarily mean that the youth did not also refer to their home country as “home” as well. The second most common explanation was that the decision to refer to one’s home country as “home” (or their parents’ home country) was in an effort to stay connected to that that country:

Leo: To still keep their traditions and cultures alive in this country like to see what it’s like in their country (Interview 5, 66-67).

Again, the decision to refer to one’s home country as “home” did not mean that he/she would not refer to Canada as “home” as well. For example, when explaining why she still called her home country “home” one youth explained:

Julia: I’m proud of that country. Every day I hear from my parents never lose you heritage because you might think you’re Canadian but do others really think you’re Canadian? The way you look is always going to identify you as Asian no matter how hard you want to change it. That’s why I consider China as home... I think both of them are my home [referring to Canada as well]. Well when it comes to cheering for two countries I’ll cheer for China first (Interview 2, 28-36).

Finally, some youth felt that the decision to call Canada “home” instead of their home country “home” could be because of the global reputation of the particular country. For example:

Leo: Maybe they’re ashamed of their home (Interview 5, 12).

Do you think the reason why a youth had to leave his/her home country (or why his/her parents had to leave their home country) is related to whether or not the youth feels like Canada is “home”? Why do you think this might be? Youth most often responded that the reason why youth or their parents left their home country may influence whether or not a youth feels at home in Canada. Some of these youth specifically spoke to the experiences of immigrants or refugees when framing their responses:

Ian: Sometimes but it entirely depends on the situation of the country. If their country is engaging in some sort of conflict or at war then they just leave because it's dangerous there other than that I don't really think so... If you were forced out then I guess they'd say that there was their home and it was just outside factors (Interview 3, 35-44).

Isaac: It could be depending on why they left because if they're forced to leave if they're in a war they might not want to go anywhere else they might just want to stay in their home town against if you're going on by your own will and you want to move to Canada for your own reasons (Interview 4, 36-39).

Julia: That could be a possibility 'cause some might come as refugees and they might not want to have that as their home country anymore. This is the new place to live. This is the better place to live. So I think that might be a category of people who might think of Canada as more being home... Immigrants or people who come because of business or because of work might identify their home country as home (Interview 2, 47-55).

In response to this question, one youth described an individual's current situation in Canada as having to do with whether or not he/she would feel at “home” in Canada:

Luke: And if you're going to be like an engineer in your country and in Canada you're doing like labour work here that might be reason to want to go back (Interview 5, 96-97).

Interestingly, one youth shared the following response indicating that many youth may not be involved in the decision to leave one's home country:

Lisa: If you don't really have a choice like your mom said you have to come to Canada if they don't want to they stay in their country (Interview 6, 30-31).

Do you think it might be hard for youth who have always planned on returning to their or their parents' home country to feel like Canada is "home"?

Why do you think this might be? The majority of youth responded that they felt that if a youth always planned on returning to their or their parents' home country, it may be more difficult to feel as at "home" in Canada:

Julia: Yes definitely. I have known people who have come here but they have always wanted to go back they just liked their country better because maybe here in Canada they just weren't used to it so they'd definitely say that their home country is their country (Interview 2, 67-69).

One youth felt that even if he did want to move to his parents' home country, this would not affect how he felt about Canada:

Ian: Um I don't know I think I'd-- In my opinion if I said I wanted to go back I'd still call Canada home just cause I was born here and lived here for really long. So I wouldn't call over their home it would just be a place to be (Interview 3, 54-56).

Is there anything the school or community could do for these youth to help them feel more at "home" in Canada? Youth most commonly reported the need for a greater number of cultural events. For example, a program that would connect youth of similar backgrounds:

Lisa: Maybe like have a program where their backgrounds are and like bring people from-- People who have had the experience that they have had. Join a group and talk about it to feel more comfortable in Canada (Interview 6, 75-77).

Youth also felt that cultural events could be developed that would involve not only individuals of the same backgrounds but also the larger school community:

Julia: In elementary schools we had a national food day which I thought was really interesting. Everybody would bring food from their own country and they would all have a big lunch and we would just share food. But in high school I see that less and less. I want that more of an international day of some kind (Interview 2, 85-88).

This youth continued on to explain why such an event as the one described above could potentially help youth feel more at “home” in Canada:

Julia: At least more accepting because that’s the image I have of Canada it’s just welcoming that’s the only word I can put it in. It accepts all cultures. But once you’re in here you feel like okay now that I’m here what do I do? You’re kind of lost and confused (Interview 2, 92-94).

The next most common response was that youth thought there should be greater assistance provided for youth in terms of assisting them to establish friendships or connect with others:

Leo: Help them find friends (Interview 5, 169).

Some youth also felt that greater assistance learning English would be beneficial. For example:

Leo: Like help them with homework if they don’t understand the English in their class. Or like some people they know English but then they come to Canada they get nervous with like the people who actually speak English (Interview 5, 169-171).

Finally, some youth noted that Canada is doing a “good job” in this respect. However, one of these youth recognized that in her situation this could be partially explained by her being of European descent:

Issy: No not really. I think they do a pretty good job at making you feel welcome and at home where you are but I think there’s definitely a lot more openness to people of European descent than other places. Maybe because people would understand that the majority of people here would be descending from European descendents (Interview 1, 68-71).

Do you find that some youth prefer to hang out with people of their own ethnicity? Why do you think this is? Most youth felt that this was not the case in their school. For example:

Lisa: Not really because everyone mixes with everybody and becomes friends. They don't really think of their background they just make friends (Interview 6, 95-96).

However, some youth felt that this does occur:

Isaac: Yes because they probably don't know any other people. And probably don't know how to communicate with other ethnic backgrounds just their own language and try to find people that are similar to them (Interview 4, 83-85).

In past focus groups youth mentioned that Ontario's school curriculum does not need to reflect all the people who live in Canada because newcomer youth need to learn the ways of this society. Do you agree with this? Why can't curriculum be developed to reflect the diversity of Ontario and teach newcomer youth the ways of society at the same time? Generally, the youth felt that the school curriculum should be reflective of the diversity present within Canada. As expressed by one youth:

Issy: Well I disagree that the curriculum should be set up to reflect the majority Caucasian. I think that newcomers to Canada shouldn't-- Well they should try to assimilate but they should still keep their sense of where they came from and what their history is and be proud of their culture and traditions and be proud that they're making Canada more diverse and they're adding to Canada and what makes Canada diverse and multicultural (Interview 1, 119-123).

Yet another insightful response was provided by a youth, who after stating that the curriculum should be reflective discussed some of the course options such as religion, American history, world history and fashion that were available in her school. However, it was her experience that not a lot of students were aware that these courses were offered and she felt that these courses were not valued:

Julia: And they should stress it more [that the religion, world history and fashion are course options] because there's the impression that those classes aren't as important as the academics because those classes are all either open courses or mixed courses so some universities/colleges don't accept those courses as final credits so there's that problem as well. I know that I took religion and it was an open course, universities won't look at that. They require 6 U/M courses and open is just not one of them (Interview 2, 163-167).

One youth, though he initially disagreed with the opening statement, continued on in his response to state that he did feel that the emphasis placed on diversity within the curriculum should perhaps be dependent on the demographics of a particular area:

Ian: I don't think so. Again it refers to the place-- If it's highly populated with people from different ethnicities maybe they should incorporate some sort of cultural experience into the school system (Interview 3, 88-90).

In response to this question another youth stressed that newcomers must learn the ways of Canadian society:

Leo: I think you are obligated-- Like you should learn society and Canada like how-- What things are common. Like in your country some things could be uncommon then here in society or in a different society maybe like-- I can't think of a good example but-- (Interview 5, 221-223)

You have talked a lot about ... (reiterate things the youth has said to be important during focus group or interview which may hint towards a certain ethnic identity). Why is this important to you? All youth who chose to respond to this question discussed their desire to maintain a connection with their or their parents' home country. The following are two such examples:

Ian: 'Cause I think people should have some sort of connection to their culture. It's up to them if they want to lose it completely or not but I think you should have some forms of connection. Not that you would necessarily go back or have any great ties with it but you should still have some sort of connection (Interview 3, 118-121).

Julia: They're important because I was born into it. Because everyday around me, besides school, Chinese is all in my ears. And my parents have these expectations that if you're Chinese you have to do this, if you're Chinese you have to do that, so that left a big impression in my brain. I don't want to use brain washed but I don't know what's the other word for it? I grew up thinking and exposed to all that stuff that's why I want to go back (Interview 2, 184-188).

If time follow up on suggestions provided for programs/resources to enhance his/her school experience and ask more specifically what these might look like.

Youth brainstormed around the possibility of a greater number of cultural events being held at school, which all students would be invited to be a part of. As one youth explained, educating others on their respective cultures is of importance for the following reason:

Lisa: Because most people think their tradition is very important to them so they have to keep it up and if like-- And if they don't-- Like some people they come to school here in their Muslim clothes and they feel offended that people might laugh at them or bully them (Interview 6, 162-164).

Many events were suggested which will now be shared. Youth discussed having days when they would be encouraged to come to school dressed in their traditional clothing and would be provided the opportunity to showcase their cultural practices. Youth proposed the idea of their school hosting a national food day once a semester, when students would bring in samples of food from their or their parents' home country and share information of how these foods are prepared and when they are traditionally enjoyed. Youth also suggested the possibility of having teams that could compete in competitions on cultural knowledge. Team members could learn some of the language, and attempt a traditional practice associated with the culture such as playing an instrument or learning a dance. Finally, youth suggested organizing cricket teams.

Youth also discussed the need for clubs for youth of diverse ethnicities. Youth felt

that these clubs would provide an opportunity for these youth to connect socially and perhaps discuss with each other why they left their home country. One youth also felt that for youth who are new to Canada, academic assistance could also be provided in this sort of context.

One youth said that changes should be made to the ESL program so that an ESL class could include youth of the same ethnicity as well as a teacher of this ethnicity. Also, it should be common practice when a student arrives to Canada for the school's administration to introduce this student to any other students of similar background. Lastly, one youth explained that courses on world history and politics should be offered beginning in elementary school and be mandatory in an attempt to have Canadian students be, in her own words:

Issy: ... More worldly (Interview 1, 168).

Cultural Identity

T-tests were conducted on the MEIM as well as the YETI, though unfortunately the current study's relatively small number of participants did not allow for the assumptions of the *t*-tests to be met. However, the results of these analyses followed a pattern that one might expect, with youth who left or whose parents left their home country for fear-based reasons generally having higher means on the MEIM than youth who left or whose parents left for reasons concerning social mobility. Conversely, youth who left their home country for reasons of social mobility generally had higher means on the YETI than youth who left or whose parents left for fear-based reasons.

Table 6.2

Mean scores on the MEIM and YETI

	Fear-based	Social mobility
MEIM	54.00	38.54
YETI	84.00	91.14

Chapter Seven: Study Two Discussion

This study has found that youth who or whose parents had left their home country for fear-based reasons are less involved within their school and the wider community than youth who left for reasons concerning their social mobility. Prior to presenting a discussion on this finding, the challenges experienced by these youth as well as the resources they have reported as being of benefit to assist them in overcoming these challenges will be discussed. Similarities between the findings of the first study and this second study will then be presented. The larger implications of the findings from both studies appear in the final chapter.

Challenges that youth in the current study discussed included a lack of familiarity with societal norms (as cited in Chen, 2000; Coleman, 2006), language barriers (as cited in Wadsworth et al., 2008), differences in teacher expectations (as cited in Watt et al., 1996), difficulty with peer relationships (as cited in Watt et al., 1996), and a possible lack of knowledge concerning available resources (as cited in Anisef & Kilbride, 2001). In reference to the latter challenge, as described in the results section, Julia reported that she knew there was a Student Voice Club, but did not know how to join this club.

Some of the resources, which youth noted as being beneficial or were suggested to assist them in overcoming challenges, corresponded to suggestions provided by youth in a previous study conducted by Watt and colleagues (1996); examples include the use of small group work in class, as well as introducing newcomer youth to newcomer youth of similar backgrounds who have been in Canada for a longer length of time. Additional suggestions provided by the current study's youth included additional time spent with the educational assistant in the ESL classroom as well as in mainstream classes. It was also

proposed that this educational assistant speak the youth's first language. Next, one youth discussed the need for streamed courses as grades obtained in "open" courses are not looked at by universities. Beyond academics, bullying was noted to be a concern and anti-bullying initiatives were called for. In addition, the youth desired a greater variety in their choice of sports in physical education as well as school teams, with cricket being repeatedly suggested. Youths' responses demonstrated the contention that resources offered within the education system have the ability to assist them (as cited in Anisef & Kilbride, 2001; Yakushko et al., 2008).

Finally, youth in the current study commonly discussed their parents' influence on their decision to attend school and the importance the youth often placed on obeying their parents, consistent with previous research showing that parental support has been found to be positively associated with academic achievement (Lahaie, 2008). Likewise, youth also discussed their parents' influence on their choice of friends, clothes and the things they do for fun, suggesting that for these youth, parental influence may be a salient factor in their acculturation, which is likely to affect their educational experience. For example, consider Julia who was discouraged by her parents from participating in art and music programs which she enjoyed, but are valued in Canada more so than in her home country. Within this study, youth also frequently discussed the importance of a supportive teacher. This finding is consistent with the existing literature which has found that a teacher's support is of particular importance in regards to both academic achievement (Luthar et al., 2000) and assisting to ensure parental involvement within a youth's education (Green et al., 2007).

Despite the challenges experienced by the youth in this study, youth not only indicated that they planned on completing secondary school and pursuing their education at the postsecondary level, but also discussed: (a) the importance of obtaining a better education than their parents were able to or what was available in their or their parents' home country, as well as (b) education as a priority in their lives.

Though youth in the current study discussed their academic ambitions, diversity could be found in the perception of their overall educational experiences. To begin, first generation youth provided comments and reported a pattern of skipping, which suggests that they might perceive their education experiences as being less positive than recent newcomer youth. Likewise, recent newcomer youth were found to position their educational experiences in comparison to those educational experiences they had in their home country. Thus, I would suggest that recent newcomer youths' previous experiences in their home country mitigate how they perceive their current educational experiences.

Consider Julia who discussed liking the openness of her school in regards to students being able to express themselves through their dress and hairstyle. Julia's response was framed against her previous experience in her home country where she reported conformity as being the norm. Kyle, however, who had no alternative education system with which to compare his current experience to reported that he particularly disliked not being allowed to wear a hat at school. Though Kyle may well be justified in his dislike for the "no hat rule", it is interesting to see the contrast in the perspectives of Julia and Kyle, as even though Julia also currently attends a school with a "no hat rule" she still feels her school is open.

In addition, youths' responses differed in regards to whether they reported that they or their parents had left their home country for fear-based reasons or reasons concerning their social mobility. As previously presented in Table 5.3, the youth who had or whose parents had left for reasons of social mobility were generally found to have fathers and mothers with a higher educational attainment than youth classified as leaving for fear-based reasons. Mothers and fathers were also classified in terms of their change in profession upon arriving in Canada. For example, a father who was employed in his home country as a police officer, but who is currently unemployed, would be considered to have experienced a decrease in social status associated with his profession. In general, youth who reported leaving their home country for reasons of social mobility were found to more often have fathers who upon arriving to Canada began working in a profession with an increase or no change in social status than youth who reported leaving their or their parents' home country for fear-based reasons. Finally, a greater number of youth who had or whose parents had left their home country for reasons of social mobility already knew (or their parents knew) people in Canada prior to arriving. Thus, it appears that the parents of youth who left their home country for reasons of social mobility possessed a greater number of resources upon arriving to Canada, which provides additional support for their classification of having left for reasons of social mobility.

Youth who reported that they or their parents had left their home country for fear-based reasons reported participating in fewer organized school and community activities than those who left for reasons of social mobility. Though this finding may partially be explained by access to resources, considering this finding in combination with these youths' common assertions they were considering returning to their or their parents'

home country, these youth may have been less likely to participate in such activities because they may return to their home country, or hoped that conditions in their home country would change in such a way that they would have this option. Therefore, perhaps these youth view residing in Canada as temporary and therefore do not see the value of becoming involved in these activities. However, given that other youth reported that they or their parents left their home country for reasons of social mobility, engaging in such school and wider community activities may for these youth (and/or their parents) be viewed as means to achieving further social mobility. Perhaps then these youth engage in activities within their school and community to a greater extent as they have different goals as to what they hope to achieve from their time spent in Canada.

Youths' responses in the interviews provided further support for this notion, as they expressed that the reason youth emigrated from their home country affected whether or not they subsequently felt at "home" in Canada. Likewise, they vocalized their opinions that if youth always planned to return to their home country, they would not be as likely to establish connections in Canada. These youth continued on to suggest that a greater number of cultural events, greater assistance to help youth make friends and to learn English would be of assistance to youth who did not feel at "home" in Canada.

The diverse experiences of these two groups of youth were also examined in terms of their cultural identity, with youth who had or whose parents had left their home country for reasons of social mobility tending to have higher means on a measure of Canadian identity. Conversely, youth who had or whose parents had left their home country for fear-based reasons tended to have higher means on a measure of ethnic identity.

In comparing the above findings to the findings of the previous study, youth in both studies reported experiencing similar challenges within the education system, and these are consistent with previous research. Similar to the first study, youth in the second study also discussed programs and resources offered within the education system that assisted them to overcome the previously noted challenges, as well as suggested others that may be of benefit. The finding that youth emphasized the importance of education was also corroborated, which has important implications as a youth's expectation that he/she would complete secondary school, the knowledge that more education often leads to a better career, and the desire to pursue a career that requires a secondary school education have all been found to contribute to a youth's success in completing secondary school (Watt et al., 1996). Thus, these two studies garner further support for Watt and colleagues' (1996) previous finding that youths' goals assist them to overcome challenges and contribute to their academic success. Similar to Study 1, diversity was once again seen in the responses of recent newcomer and first generation youth, with their responses suggesting that recent newcomer youth may perceive their educational experiences as being more positive than first generation youth. However, this finding was not as apparent as it was in Study 1.

In addition, the current study built on Study 1 not only by attempting to replicate its findings, but also by examining variations in the reported patterns of school and community involvement of newcomer youth. Implications of these findings are addressed in the following chapter. Finally, possible implications to current policy are suggested based on the exploration of Study 1 and Study 2's findings to enhance newcomer youths' educational experiences.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

In this chapter, theoretical implications of the findings from both studies as well as related policy implications will be presented. This research has been successful in illustrating that newcomer youth are not a homogenous group. This is important as existing literature has stressed the need for additional research focusing on the diversity within the newcomer youth population (McGrath, 2008; Yakushko et al., 2008). Taken together, the two research studies have illustrated the multidimensionality in the youths' experiences with respect to their perceived educational experiences and their involvement in school and the wider community; the prior finding being related to generational status and the latter being related to the motivation behind relocating to Canada. While these studies were small and exploratory and are not intended to be generalizable, they serve to demonstrate the importance of exploring the diversity within the newcomer youth population.

Both studies show that newcomer youth still face challenges within the education system. For example, challenges include navigating a new educational system, learning the English language and establishing friendships with youth of other ethnicities. It is concerning that despite previous research which has been successful in documenting these and other challenges facing newcomer youth (see Watt et al., 2006), these challenges continue to persist and affect the educational experiences of newcomer youth. In addition to discussing challenges, youth mentioned some frustrations they experienced at school, including school rules, course selection and streaming. For example, youth noted that as universities do not consider "open" courses, they saw these courses as being of lower value and were less likely to take those courses. However, they also noted that

they found such courses especially engaging and did not like the way courses were streamed. This finding demonstrates the potential value of such courses in keeping students engaged within the school system. Students' perceptions of the open course may also indicate that students and their parents do not fully understand the way courses are streamed and laid out for progression through secondary school. Therefore, more efforts to provide students and their parents with a more functional understanding of course selection options may be needed with particular attention focused on parents of newcomer youth who may face more barriers in understanding the secondary school system and structures. This research corresponds to previous research findings documenting difficulties adjusting to a new education system (Hospital for Sick Children 2005; Suarez-Orozco, 2010), demonstrating the persistence of this issue. Thus it is particularly important that newcomer youth and their parents have a sound understanding of the education system so that they are able to successfully navigate within it to address future challenges.

Furthermore, as the importance of parental influence was continually noted by the youth, it would be beneficial for teachers to receive specific training on how to engage parents within their classrooms. In addition, as these youth also requested a greater number of cultural activities, parents could be a valuable resource as to how to effectively incorporate such programs so that they are meaningful to the youth. Sogunro (2001) has called for enhanced teacher training to assist teachers in addressing multiculturalism beyond the celebration of holidays and it is here that parents' knowledge may be of assistance. In addition, this would allow parents to become further involved with the school, which has been found to positively influence academic achievement (Lahaie,

2008). Furthermore, as maintaining correspondence with the school has been a documented challenge for parents of newcomer youth (Coleman, 2006), involvement in this way would assist the fostering of stronger relationships between parents and teachers. Sensitivity to multiculturalism in terms of the diverse views that are presented by parents would also be helpful when educational staff are discussing the courses and school system with parents. This is particularly important as youth in both studies indicated that their countries of origin had different priorities and approaches to education.

Such an approach may improve the likelihood of parents' understanding the school system and progression of courses as well as making them feel more welcome to become involved in their children's school. Likewise, parents' involvement in their children's schooling may serve to expose them to the realities of their children's educational experiences, which is important as the youths' responses in the current study indicate that parental influence extends to their choice of friends, clothes and the things they do for fun. Thus as illustrated in previous literature, parents are able to influence youths' acculturation within their host country (Berry et al., 2006), with youth who partake in the cultural practices of both their home and host country experiencing better psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Berry, 2006). To provide an example of parental influence on youths' decisions, consider Ida who shared that her father felt that growing up in Canada was causing her to mature too quickly. Consider this hypothetical situation; if Ida's father was able to become more involved in her schooling, this may assist him in understanding the challenges she faces in regards to navigating between the culture of his home country and Canada. With this knowledge, Ida's father may become more comfortable allowing Ida to take part in additional cultural practices of the host

country while all the while acting as a valuable resource to the teacher regarding how to meaningfully incorporate cultural activities of his home country into the school day.

The availability of meaningful programming, which may be enhanced through parental involvement, is of great importance. As youth had diverse views on the necessity of a multicultural curriculum, this raises further questions as to their level of engagement if such a curriculum were to be offered. This is an important concern since when classroom discussions or assigned readings include information specific to their ethnicity minority, students have been shown to achieve greater academic success (Kagen & Zahn, 1975; Stevenson, Lee, Chen, Stringler, Hsu & Kitamura, 1990), which these youth also noted as being of importance. Perhaps these youth conceptualize multiculturalism as being an add-on rather than an integrated component of the curriculum and thus question its meaningfulness. Responses provided by the current study's youth seem to provide support for this notion. For example, some youth shared that once a semester, their school typically hosts a cultural food lunch when youth bring in food from their home country to share. Though youth appeared to value such practices, they also requested the incorporation of their traditional sports such as cricket into their physical education class, where mainstream youth could be equally as involved.

This finding also demonstrates the importance these youth give to their relationships with their school peers. Given that difficulty with peer relationships has been a documented challenge faced by newcomer youth (Davison et al., 1999) in addition to friends being a factor in acculturation, integrative programs such as this provide opportunities for youth to get to know each other and also allow for newcomer youths' knowledge and skills to be valued by their mainstream peers.

Such suggestions tended to be equally embraced among all youth in the focus groups, though youth differed in terms of their reported current involvement within the school and wider community, with youth having left or whose parents left their home country for fear-based reasons reporting less involvement than those who left or whose parents left for reasons concerning social mobility. Thus this finding garners further support for the idea that if meaningful activities were developed for youth, their engagement in the school and wider community would increase. This highlights the importance of ensuring a variety of programs are available to these youth so that there exists a greater likelihood of them finding activities focused on both cultural practices of their home and host country, which they would engage in. These programs should be offered at no cost or at a minimal cost to the student given the tight financial circumstances of many newcomer families (Beiser, 1999). For the same reason, when these programs can be integrated into the school day this may increase attendance for those youth who may otherwise have to maintain an after-school job or care for younger siblings.

However, it is possible that for youth who had or whose parents had left their home country for fear-based reasons, involvement in such activities does not equate to being a pathway to success as their motivation to leave their home country was not to come to Canada to further their social mobility. Though now that these youth are here, their goal may be to complete their education and return to their or their parents' home country. However, involvement in the school and wider community may assist these youth to meet their goals as participation in extracurricular activities has been found to assist youth in the development of peer relationships and a sense of community (Watt et

al., 1996), which has been found to be positively associated with academic achievement (Coleman, 2006). Consider that such activities allow for opportunities to practice English, which is a skill that will transfer to the classroom (Watt et al., 1996). Likewise, participation in social activities such as these (of either the home or host country's culture) have been shown to assist newcomer youth in their overall school adjustment and social competence (Chen & Tse, 2010). Therefore, given the benefits of engagement in activities of both the home and host countries' cultures, even for those youth who do not intend to remain in Canada, encouragement should be offered to participate. However, such invitations should be couched in terms that relate to the goals of these youth and speak to transferable skills that would be an asset should they be able to return to their country of origin.

It would therefore seem then that youth who had or whose parents had left their home country for reasons of social mobility are at an advantage within the education system with respect to their involvement in the school and wider community. Perhaps then this differential involvement may contribute to the youths' positive adjustment and at least partially explain why it is some newcomer youth are able to overcome challenges they encounter within the education system, while others are not. This finding is important because though exploration of the challenges newcomer youth experience within the education system has been a common research focus, the current study provides some insight into why it is some youth may be successful in overcoming these challenges. As the education system aims to assist these youth in their adjustment to a new country and has been found to be a viable point of intervention for the delivery of resources (Anisef & Kilbride, 2001; Yakushko et al., 2008) while also serving as a source

of upward mobility (Hao & Pong, 2008; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995), it is important that the education system be able to effectively meet the needs of all newcomers and ensure that the available resources are easily accessible.

When attempting to increase the involvement of youth who left or whose parents left their home country for fear-based reasons and view residing in Canada as temporary, teachers' approach should be purposeful. Engaging with these youth in a manner that would suggest that they are interested in establishing deep connections to their current community may serve to push these youth away if this is not their goal. Rather, these youth should have the relevance of school and community involvement identified to them with their respective goals in mind. For example, the opportunity to develop transferrable skills which may assist in obtaining admittance into postsecondary education or for a future career, in either Canada or their or their parents' home country. Also, another relevant benefit would be the possibility of connecting with youth of the same ethnicity or those who have had similar experiences, especially if youth have access to clubs pertaining to the traditional cultural practices of their or their parents' home country, which could assist them in maintaining a sense of connectedness.

The finding that these youth who left their or their parents' home country for fear-based reasons tended to have higher means on a measure of ethnic identity is a positive finding given ethnic identity formation has been found to be especially important to minority youth as the dominant society often places particular importance on the ethnic identities of minority group members (Fuligni et al., 2005). However, for the above reasons it is concerning that youth who had reported leaving their home country for reasons concerning social mobility tended to have lower means on a measure of ethnic

identity. Likewise, it is problematic that youth who had or whose parents had left their home country for reasons of social mobility may not have as high of ethnic identity since ethnic identity contributes to the integration profile of cultural identity in which individuals tend to demonstrate better psychological as well as sociocultural adaptation (Berry, 2006).

In addition, encouragement to become involved within the school and wider community should also be offered given the finding that youth who had or whose parents had left their home country for fear-based reasons tended to have lower means on a measure of Canadian identity, which is concerning since national identity contributes to the integration profile of cultural identity in which individuals tend to have better psychological as well as sociocultural adaptation (Berry, 2006). Also, though many youth who reported having left their or their parents' home country for fear-based reasons considered returning, youth also articulated that living conditions in their home country would need to improve for them to do so and some were skeptical when or if such changes would occur, thus demonstrating the need for these youth to feel at "home" in Canada in the meantime.

In relation to cultural identity, the findings of this study reaffirm the notion that culture is not static but rather a fluid entity, as previously suggested by Wierzbicka (2005); this is important since with increasing immigration, this will only be more pervasive. Likewise, the findings serve to demonstrate the diverse experiences of newcomer youth, which is just one piece to a larger puzzle in the full understanding of these youths' perceived educational experiences as well as involvement in their school and the wider community. This study therefore provides further support to the idea that

though valuable, large scale studies which point out larger trends and patterns in the newcomer youth population, including Berry's conventional models of acculturation, should be viewed only as a starting point by which to understand newcomer youths' experiences upon arriving to their host country as their experiences are multidimensional. With the findings of this study and the emergence of others like it, it is hoped that the dominant discourse concerning newcomer youth will shift towards a discourse which recognizes the complexities within their individual experiences. Finally, this study has attempted to acknowledge acculturation as being a process which takes place between both newcomers and individuals within the host country, which is often unaccounted for in the current research (Tardif-Williams & Fisher, 2009).

Limitations and Future Research

As a means to add to this body of literature, future research should attempt to replicate the findings of this study with a larger number of youth. In addition, it would be beneficial to conduct focus groups with only a group of newcomer youth, as it is possible that having mainstream youth present in the current study's focus groups may have influenced the newcomer youths' responses. Such replication would also allow for analyses of the measures of youths' cultural identity, which is important as research has been called for which examines acculturation with greater specificity (Phinney & Flores, 2002). In addition, it would be valuable to assess if upon implementation of the youths' suggestions (especially in regards to cultural activities), youths' involvement increased significantly, as well as any impact this had on their cultural identity. Likewise, further exploration of newcomer youths' perceived educational experiences is important as this would provide information as to how long this unique window of opportunity to engage

recent newcomer youth within the education system exists, before youth no longer frame their current experiences against those had in their home country; this is important because as participation in such activities has many benefits, the longer this opportunity exists the more time there is for additional engagement.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent

Giving Voice to the Barriers Faced by Culturally Diverse Youth

Principal Investigator: Dr. Dawn Zinga, Brock University

INVITATION

You are invited to participate in research. The purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges and barriers faced by culturally diverse youth in different regions of Canada. This study is part of Dr. Zinga's research program and is funded by a grant through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. This larger research program focuses on examining what different groups of young people have to say about their educational experiences, about multiculturalism, children's rights, and about Canadian society. Chrissy Deckers, a graduate student, will also be involved in this research. Her research focus is on examining differences in the issues of diversity that immigrant youth, refugee youth and international students may experience within the education system. In addition, she is interested in what supports immigrant youth, refugee youth and international students feel would be most beneficial in addressing these issues of diversity.

WHAT'S INVOLVED

As a participant, you will also be asked to participate in a focus group and discuss your experiences with a group of other young people, the researcher and a research assistant. This session will take approximately two hours and will be videotaped. You will be provided a \$10,00 gift certificate for Indigo/Chapters. You may also choose to participate in an individual interview and/or be involved in the creation of a video tape to be used in classes at Brock University that assist University students in understanding multiculturalism and related issues. The video will also be provided to participating schools and community groups as well as being made available to other universities. If you are interested in either or both of the opportunities please let the researcher know.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS

Possible benefits of participation is the ability to voice concerns and opinions about your educational experiences, about multiculturalism, children's rights, and about Canadian society. To share resources on challenges, solutions and positive outcomes with other young people. To have your voice heard and your opinions valued and respected. For the larger scientific community and the community at large, this research may offer insights into the types of programming needed to assist young people as well as information about the current barriers and benefits that they identify as part of their experiences. The creation of the video will provide a tool that can assist in educating other about diverse youth and their experiences. There also may be risks associated with participation as some individuals could experience psychological risks or social risks related to voicing their opinion in a group setting.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In the focus group session, all information you provide will be considered confidential and grouped with responses from other participants. Given the format of this session, we ask you to respect your fellow participants by keeping all information that identifies or could potentially identify a participant and/or his/her comments confidential. In written reports of this research and oral presentations, excerpts from the focus groups may be discussed but no one's name will be associated with any quotes. For example, "One of the young men in the group spoke about his experiences with a teacher...". This helps us to represent your voice and opinion without compromising your confidentiality. All focus groups will be videotaped. The videotapes will only be used for the purpose of transcribing the focus group session and will not be associated with anyone's name. These videotapes will be kept in locked filing cabinets and will only be viewed by the researcher and research assistants who have signed confidentiality agreements.

Data collected during this study will be kept for seven years and stored in locked filing cabinets. All data will be confidentially shredded or erased after seven years. Only Dr. Zinga and her research assistants will have access to the data. All individuals who have access to the data will sign confidentiality agreements.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time and may do so without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available through the organization where you participated in the study or will be mailed to you if you chose to provide your address. The results will be available in early fall 2010. If you have any questions at any point during the study or after the study please contact Dr. Dawn Zinga at Brock University by phone (905) 688-5550, ext. 3152 or via e-mail dzinga@brocku.ca.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact the Principal Investigator using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (06-286). If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca.

Thank you for your assistance in this project.

YOUTH CONSENT

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity

to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

I am under the age of 18 ☐ and understand that in order to participate I also need my parent or guardian's consent below.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT

I agree to allow my son/daughter to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

My Name: _____

My Child's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

Focus Group Guide

Giving Voice to the Barriers Faced by Culturally Diverse Youth

Principle Investigator: Dr. Dawn Zinga, Brock University

Opening reminders

Welcome everyone and introduce research team members. Remind participants about maintaining confidentiality and not using names during the session (i.e. their own or other people about whom they make be speaking). Talk about being respectful of each other and the importance of hearing what they have to say. Briefly explain the purpose of the research and remind individuals about their rights as participants. Discuss the video taping and why it's important.

Questions

Ask people to talk about their backgrounds and where they are from by going around in a circle. Talk about how people identify themselves and how when you're asked where you're from how you answer. Include information about where you were born and raised then ask the group to go around the circle and speak about how they identify themselves by using the first question below. Then continue around the circle with the questions listed below until the prompt to go into general discussion.

How would you describe yourself, an immigrant, a refugee, an international student or is there another term you prefer? What country are you from?

(If they don't offer the information ask them how long they've been in the community)

What brought you to Canada? How long have you been here? Do you plan to stay in Canada?

Who did you come to Canada with? Are you still waiting for any of your family members to join you in Canada? Did you already know people in Canada? Who?

How old are you? What level of ESL programming are you currently enrolled in?

Talk to the students about how research often says that parents' education is related to children's education but explain that this is not always the case as some parents with low education are determined that their children will go to University/college and some parents with high education may have children who rebel against the pressure to go to higher education then ask them the question below.

What is your mother's highest level of education and what is your mother's current occupation?

What is your father's highest level of education and what is your father's current occupation?

(If immigrant or refugee what was your parents' occupation before coming to Canada?)

NOW MOVE INTO GENERAL CONVERSATION: Let the student know that now you'll be asking questions and we'll be having a discussion about them.

Ask about school experiences. What are their favourite things about school? What things would they most like to change about school?

What was the transition into a Canadian school like?

Are there any programs or resources that helped make your transition easier? Can you think of anything that could have been done by the school to make your transition easier?

Do people drop out or skip a lot?

What do you think makes people drop out or skip?

Why are you in school? What helps you stay?

What role do parents play in kids attending school/finishing school?

What role do teachers play in kids attending school/finishing school?

What role do friends play in kids attending school/finishing school?

What do you think of the current programs or resources provided by the school for newcomer youth? Can you think of any programs or resources that the school could offer that you would find beneficial?

Do you plan on finishing school?

What do you plan to do once you're finished high school?

Will you stay in your community?

Do you feel valued in your communities and your school? In what ways and in what ways do you not?

Now, I'd like you to shift gears a little bit and we're going to talk about some specific issues.

How do you think multiculturalism applies here?

Ask about immigration and attitudes towards immigration.

How much would you say you know about the issues that face newcomer youth?
What would you say the issues are?

How much would you say you know about the issues that face Aboriginal youth?
What would you say the issues are?

Do you think that Canada's school systems and curriculum reflect all of the people who live in Canada?

Wrap Up

We're going to start to wrap things up now. So I'd like each of you to reflect for a minute and think about what you'll take away from our discussion. Then I'm going to ask everyone to go around and share what they've thought.

Now does anyone have anything else that they'd like to add?

Thank you for taking the time to sit down and talk about these issues. It is very important to us that we really hear what young people have to say. (Go over contact information, hand out feedback sheets, and ask people to let you know if they are interested in the other sessions)

Appendix C

Feedback Letter

Giving Voice to the Barriers Faced by Culturally Diverse Youth
Principal Investigator: Dr. Dawn Zinga, Brock University

Overview

You just finished participating in a focus group session as part of a research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges and barriers faced by culturally diverse youth in different regions of Canada. This study is part of Dr. Zinga's research program and is funded by a grant through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. This larger research program focuses on examining what different groups of young people have to say about their educational experiences, about multiculturalism, children's rights, and about Canadian society. Chrissy Deckers, a graduate student, will also be involved in this research. Her research focus is on examining differences in the issues of diversity that immigrant youth, refugee youth and international students may experience within the education system. In addition, she is interested in what supports immigrant youth, refugee youth and international students feel would be most beneficial in addressing these issues of diversity. You may be contacted to be involved in the creation of a video tape to be used in classes at Brock University that assist University students in understanding multiculturalism and related issues.

If you have experienced any emotional discomfort as result of participating in this focus group please speak with one of the researchers or with the organization (Multicultural Centre, Church, community centre, school, community organization) where the research was conducted so that you may receive help locating a resource that will allow you to discuss your feelings. Your participation may offer the larger scientific community and the community at large, insights into the types of programming needed to assist youth as well as information of the current barriers and benefits that they identify as part of their experiences.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Please remember that due to the format of focus group session, we ask you to respect your fellow participants by keeping all information that identifies or could potentially identify a participant and/or his/her comments confidential. In written reports of this research and oral presentations, excerpts from the focus groups may be discussed but no one's name will be associated with any quotes. For example, "One of the young men in the group spoke about his experiences with a teacher...". This helps us to represent your voice and opinion without compromising your confidentiality. All focus groups will be videotaped. The videotapes will only be used for the purpose of transcribing the focus group session and will not be associated with anyone's name. These videotapes will be kept in locked filing cabinets and will only be viewed by the researcher and research assistants who have signed confidentiality agreements. Data collected during this study will be kept for seven years and stored in locked filing cabinets. All data will be confidentially shredded or erased after seven years. Only Dr. Zinga and her research

assistants will have access to the data. All individuals who have access to the data will sign confidentiality agreements.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available through the organization where you participated in the study or will be mailed to you if you chose to provide your address. The results will be available in early fall 2010. If you have any questions at any point during the study or after the study please contact Dr. Dawn Zinga at Brock University by phone (905) 688-5550, ext. 3152 or via e-mail dzinga@brocku.ca.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact the Principal Investigator using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (06-286). If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca.

Thank you for your assistance in this project. We value your opinions and experiences and appreciate your taking the time to share them with us.

Appendix D

Informed Consent

Locating home: The diverse experiences of recent newcomer youth and first generation youth within Ontario's education system

Principal Investigator: Dr. Dawn Zinga, Brock University

INVITATION

You are invited to participate in research. The purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges and barriers faced by culturally diverse youth in different regions of Canada. This study is part of Dr. Zinga's research program and is funded by a grant through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. This larger research program focuses on examining what different groups of young people have to say about their educational experiences, about multiculturalism, children's rights, and about Canadian society. Chrissy Deckers, a graduate student, will also be involved in this research. Her research focus is on examining differences in the issues of diversity that newcomer youth and first generation youth may experience within the education system. In addition, she is interested in what supports newcomer youth and first generation youth feel would be most beneficial in addressing these issues of diversity.

WHAT'S INVOLVED

As a participant, you will also be asked to participate in a focus group and discuss your experiences with a group of other young people, the researcher and a research assistant. You will also be asked to participate in an individual interview. The sessions will take approximately ninety minutes and will be videotaped. Students who choose to participate in the focus group will be provided a \$10.00 gift certificate for Indigo/Chapters. Students who choose to participate in the focus group and an interview will receive a \$20.00 gift certificate for Indigo/Chapters.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS

Possible benefits of participation is the ability to voice concerns and opinions about your educational experiences, about multiculturalism, children's rights, and about Canadian society. To share resources on challenges, solutions and positive outcomes with other young people. To have your voice heard and your opinions valued and respected. For the larger scientific community and the community at large, this research may offer insights into the types of programming needed to assist young people as well as information about the current barriers and benefits that they identify as part of their experiences. There also may be risks associated with participation as some individuals could experience psychological risks or social risks related to voicing their opinion in a group setting.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In the focus group, all information you provide will be considered confidential and grouped with responses from other participants. Given the format of the focus group, we ask you to respect your fellow participants by keeping all information that identifies or could potentially identify a participant and/or his/her comments confidential. In written reports of this research and oral presentations, excerpts from a session may be discussed

but no one's name will be associated with any quotes. For example, "One of the young men in the group spoke about his experiences with a teacher...". This helps us to represent your voice and opinion without compromising your confidentiality. All sessions will be videotaped. The videotapes will only be used for the purpose of transcribing the session and will not be associated with anyone's name. These videotapes will be kept in locked filing cabinets and will only be viewed by the researcher and research assistants who have signed confidentiality agreements.

Data collected during this study will be kept for seven years and stored in locked filing cabinets. All data will be confidentially shredded or erased after seven years. Only Dr. Zinga and her research assistants will have access to the data. All individuals who have access to the data will sign confidentiality agreements.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time and may do so without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available through the organization where you participated in the study or will be mailed to you if you chose to provide your address. The results will be available in early fall 2010. If you have any questions at any point during the study or after the study please contact Dr. Dawn Zinga at Brock University by phone (905) 688-5550, ext. 3152 or via e-mail dzinga@brocku.ca.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact the Principal Investigator using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (06-286). If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca.

Thank you for your assistance in this project.

YOUTH CONSENT

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I am under the age of 18 ☐ and understand that in order to participate I also need my parent or guardian's consent below.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT

I agree to allow my son/daughter to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

My Name: _____ My Child's Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire

How old are you? _____

What grade are you in? _____

What is your religion? _____

How important is your religion to you?

___ Extremely important

___ Very important

___ Somewhat important

___ Not very important

___ Not important at all

Who did you (or your parents) come to Canada with?

Are you still waiting for any of your family members to join you in Canada?

Did you (or your parents) already know people in Canada? Who?

Describe the people who live in your neighborhood. Are most people of the same ethnicity as you? Is there a mix of ethnicities? What ethnicity are most people?

Do you still have any connections/ties to your (or you parents') home country? Please provide some examples (Perhaps visits to your home country, the decoration of your home, food prepared in your home, etc.).

What is the highest level of education your **mother** completed?

- ☐ No education
- ☐ Elementary school
- ☐ High school
- ☐ College
- ☐ University

What is your mother's current job?

What was your mother's job in her home country (if different from above)?

What is the highest level of education your **father** completed?

- ☐ No education
- ☐ Elementary school
- ☐ High school
- ☐ College
- ☐ University

What is your father's current job?

What was your father's job in his home country (if different from above)?

If you were born in Canada, how many years have your parents been in Canada for?

Do you have a part time job? _____

How many hours per week do you work on average? _____

Do you work at a business owned by your family? _____

Do you participate in any cultural groups or make use of any resources provided to people who are new to Canada? Which ones?

Do you take part in any other clubs/groups/teams or volunteer?

Appendix F

Focus Group Guide

Locating home: The diverse experiences of recent newcomer youth and first generation youth within Ontario's education system

Opening reminders

Welcome everyone and introduce research team members. Remind participants about maintaining confidentiality and not using names during the session (i.e their own or other people about whom they make be speaking). Talk about being respectful of each other and the importance of hearing what they have to say. Briefly explain the purpose of the research and remind individuals about their rights as participants. Discuss the videotaping and why it's important.

Questions

Ask people to talk about their backgrounds and where they are from by going around in a circle. Talk about how people identify themselves and how when you're asked where you're from how you answer. Include information about where you were born and raised then ask the group to go around the circle and speak about how they identify themselves. Then continue around the circle with the questions listed below until the prompt to go into general discussion.

(If they don't offer the information ask them how long they've been in Canada)

Why did you and/or your parents leave your home country? Do your parents often speak of why they left your home country or what it was like there? What brought you to Canada?

Do you/your parents plan to stay in Canada (If they plan to return to home country ask why they want to return to home country / Why they want to leave Canada / Did they always plan to return)?

Are you currently taking part in ESL programming?

NOW MOVE INTO GENERAL CONVERSATION: Let the students know that now you'll be asking questions and we'll be having a discussion about them.

What are your favourite things about school? What things would you most like to change about school?

What was the transition into a Canadian school like?

Are there any programs or resources that helped make your transition easier? Can you think of anything that could have been done by the school to make your transition easier (Ask about socially and academically)?

Do you find that people drop out or skip a lot? Have you ever skipped?

Why do other people drop out or skip? Why do you skip?

Why are you in school? What helps you stay?

Do you plan on finishing school?

What role do parents play in whether or not you attend school/finish school?

What role do teachers play whether you attend school/finish school?

What role do friends play whether you attend school/finish school?

What do you plan to do once you're finished high school?

Who are your friends in the school/community (For example do you spend your time with other students also from the same home country or of the same ethnicity / other ESL students)?

Do you find it difficult to become friends with students of another ethnicity?

Do you feel like you belong or like you're valued when you're at school? In what ways do you and in what ways do you not?

What do you think of the current programs or resources provided by the school for newcomer youth or culturally diverse youth? Can you think of any programs or resources that the school could offer that you would find beneficial (Ask about socially and academically)?

Do you and your parents ever have disagreements about things you want to wear, people you want to hang out with or things you want to do for fun? Do you feel it is important to obey your parents when it comes to these things?

What does Canadian society look like to you (For example when you picture Canada is it culturally diverse)?

What kinds of attitudes do you think there are towards immigration in your school and in your community?

Do you feel that your school and your community are open to cultural diversity and adapting to the needs of youth of other ethnicities?

Do you think that Canada's school systems and curriculum reflect all of the people who live in Canada?

Are there any other issues that face youth who are new to Canada or who have immigration in their more recent history that haven't yet been mentioned?

Wrap Up

Now does anyone have anything else that they'd like to add?

Thank you for taking the time to sit down and talk about these issues. It is very important to us that we really hear what young people have to say. (Go over contact information, hand out feedback sheets, and ask people to let you know if they are interested in the other sessions)

Appendix G

In this country people come from a lot of different cultures. The following statements are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how well you feel about it or react to it. Please think carefully about each statement and respond based on your personal feelings. **Circle the number that reflects your agreement.**

In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be:

4 strongly agree	3 somewhat agree	2 somewhat disagree	1 strongly disagree	
1. I have spent time trying to figure out more about my own ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.	4	3	2	1
2. I am active in organization or social groups that include mostly member of my own ethnicity.	4	3	2	1
3. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means to me.	4	3	2	1
4. I like meeting and getting to know people from ethnic groups other than my own.	4	3	2	1
5. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.	4	3	2	1
6. I am happy that I am a member of the ethnic group I belong to.	4	3	2	1
7. I sometimes think it would better if different ethnic groups didn't try to mix.	4	3	2	1
8. I am not very clear about the role of my ethnicity in my life.	4	3	2	1
9. I often spend time with people from ethnic groups other than my own.	4	3	2	1
10. I really have not spent much time trying to learn about the culture or history of my ethnic group.	4	3	2	1
11. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	4	3	2	1
12. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me, in terms of how well to relate to my own group and other groups.	4	3	2	1
13. In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.	4	3	2	1
14. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments.	4	3	2	1
15. I don't try to become friends with people from other ethnic groups.	4	3	2	1
16. I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music or customs.	4	3	2	1
17. I am involved in activities with people from other ethnic groups.	4	3	2	1
18. I feel a strong sense of attachment towards my own ethnic group.	4	3	2	1
19. I enjoy being around people from ethnic groups other than my own.	4	3	2	1
20. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.	4	3	2	1

Appendix H

Here are a number of statements that pertain to your feelings and attitudes and out being Canadian. Please read each statement carefully and think about how well it describes your thoughts about being Canadian. If you do not consider yourself to be Canadian please indicate that in statement 1 and indicate how well each statement describes your thoughts and feelings. Please rate each statement using the scale provided below (**Circle your answer**).

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree or disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree	
1. I identify myself as being Canadian.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I really feel that I belong with other Canadians.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I identify with other Canadians.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I feel a common bond with other Canadians.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I don't see myself as similar to other Canadians.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I find it difficult to form a bond with other Canadians.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My attitudes are similar to those of other Canadians.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I feel good when I think of myself as Canadian.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I often think about what it means to be a Canadian.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Just thinking about the fact that I am Canadian gives me bad feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I feel I have a lot in common with other Canadians.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I don't feel a sense of being <i>connected</i> with other Canadians.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I see myself as being a fairly typical member of Canadian society.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I often regret that I am Canadian.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Being Canadian has very little to do with how I feel about myself.	1	2	3	4	5
16. My Canadian identity is not a very significant part of myself.	1	2	3	4	5
17. The fact that I am Canadian enters my mind.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I don't feel good about being Canadian.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I'm glad to be Canadian.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Being Canadian is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I don't feel good about my Canadian ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I am not usually conscious of my Canadian ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5
23. My Canadian ethnicity is a source of positive feelings for me.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I almost never think about being Canadian.	1	2	3	4	5
25. The fact that I am Canadian is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I don't feel strong ties to other Canadians.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I feel I don't fit in <i>well</i> with other Canadians.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Being Canadian is an important part of my self-image.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I feel that most of my values are not shared by other Canadians.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I often think about the fact that I am Canadian.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix I

Interview Guide

Locating home: The diverse experiences of recent newcomer youth and first generation youth within Ontario's education system

Opening reminders

Welcome and introduce research team members. Remind participants about maintaining confidentiality and not using names during the session (i.e their own or other people about whom they make be speaking). Briefly explain the purpose of the research and remind individuals about their rights as participants. Discuss the videotaping and why it's important.

Questions

In past focus groups many youth referred to their or their parents' home country as "home" even after living in Canada for their entire life or many years, however other youth talked about Canada as being their "home" even if they had been here for a couple years or just a few months. Why do you think this may be?

Do you think the reason why a youth had to leave his/her home country (or why his/her parents had to leave their home country) is related to whether or not the youth feels like Canada is home? Why do you think this might be? (Ask youth to think about themselves or other youth they know)

Do you think it might be hard for youth who have always planned on returning to their or their parents' home country to feel like Canada is home? Why do you think this might be?

Is there anything the school or community could do for these youth to help them feel more at home in Canada?

Do you find that some youth prefer to hang out with people of their own ethnicity? Why do you think this is? (Ask if youth previously reported having a culturally diverse group of friends)

In past focus groups youth mentioned that Ontario's school curriculum does not need to reflect all the people who live in Canada because newcomer youth need to learn the ways of this society. Do you agree with this? Why can't curriculum be developed to reflect the diversity of Ontario and teach newcomer youth the ways of society at the same time?

You have talked a lot about ... (reiterate things the youth has said to be important during focus group or interview which may hint towards a certain ethnic identity). Why is this important to you?

If time follow up on suggestions provided for programs/resources to enhance his/her school experience and ask more specifically what these might look like. (Start with his/her suggestion)

Wrap Up

Now do you have anything else that you'd like to add?

Thank you for taking the time to sit down and talk about these issues. It is very important to us that we really hear what young people have to say. (Go over contact information, hand out feedback sheets)

Appendix J

Feedback Letter

The Diverse Educational Experiences of Recent Newcomer Youth and First Generation Youth

Principal Investigator: Dr. Dawn Zinga, Brock University

Overview

You just finished participating in a focus group session or an interview as part of a research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges and barriers faced by culturally diverse youth in different regions of Canada. This study is part of Dr. Zinga's research program and is funded by a grant through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. This larger research program focuses on examining what different groups of young people have to say about their educational experiences, about multiculturalism, children's rights, and about Canadian society. Chrissy Deckers, a graduate student, will also be involved in this research. Her research focus is on examining differences in the issues of diversity that newcomer youth and first generation youth may experience within the education system. In addition, she is interested in what supports newcomer youth and first generation youth feel would be most beneficial in addressing these issues of diversity. You may be contacted to be involved in the creation of a video tape to be used in classes at Brock University that assist University students in understanding multiculturalism and related issues.

If you have experienced any emotional discomfort as result of participating in this focus group please speak with one of the researchers or with the organization (Multicultural Centre, Church, community centre, school, community organization) where the research was conducted so that you may receive help locating a resource that will allow you to discuss your feelings. Your participation may offer the larger scientific community and the community at large, insights into the types of programming needed to assist youth as well as information of the current barriers and benefits that they identify as part of their experiences.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Please remember that due to the format of focus group session, we ask you to respect your fellow participants by keeping all information that identifies or could potentially identify a participant and/or his/her comments confidential. In written reports of this research and oral presentations, excerpts from the focus groups may be discussed but no one's name will be associated with any quotes. For example, "One of the young men in the group spoke about his experiences with a teacher...". This helps us to represent your voice and opinion without compromising your confidentiality. All focus groups will be videotaped. The videotapes will only be used for the purpose of transcribing the focus group session and will not be associated with anyone's name. These videotapes will be kept in locked filing cabinets and will only be viewed by the researcher and research assistants who have signed confidentiality agreements. Data collected during this study will be kept for seven years and stored in locked filing cabinets. All data will be confidentially shredded or erased after seven years. Only Dr. Zinga and her research

assistants will have access to the data. All individuals who have access to the data will sign confidentiality agreements.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available through the organization where you participated in the study or will be mailed to you if you chose to provide your address. The results will be available in early fall 2010. If you have any questions at any point during the study or after the study please contact Dr. Dawn Zinga at Brock University by phone (905) 688-5550, ext. 3152 or via e-mail dzinga@brocku.ca.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact the Principal Investigator using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (06-286). If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca.

Thank you for your assistance in this project. We value your opinions and experiences and appreciate your taking the time to share them with us.